BOSTON PUBLIC LIBRARY
3 9999 08654 180 0

No. 7588.152

THE TRVSTEES OF THE PVBLIC LIBRARY
LVX
OMNIVM
CIVIVM
MDCCCLII
MDCCC LXXVIII
OF THE CITY OF BOSTON
1852 1878

GIVEN BY

Dr. Francis H. Brown

(9)

ΦBK No. 41.

Francis H. Brown.

from library of

ΘΔΧ -

Witherspoon.

7585.27
etc.

Presented by Br. Asahel Stearns,
Chelmsford.

THE

IMPROVEMENT OF THE MIND;

OR A ΦBK

SUPPLEMENT TO THE ART OF LOGIC,

IN TWO PARTS.

BY ISAAC WATTS, D. D.

7588.152

ALSO HIS

POSTHUMOUS WORKS,

Publiſhed from the Manuſcript,

BY *D. JENNINGS*, D. D. AND *P. DODDRIDGE*, D. D.

PUBLIC LIBRARY
CITY OF BOSTON

PRINTED AT EXETER, NEWHAMPSHIRE,
BY *J. LAMSON*, AND *T. ODIORNE*,
FOR DAVID WEST, N°. 36. MARLBOROUGH
STREET, BOSTON.
MDCCXCIII.

9181

Dr Francis H. Brown,
June 5, 1895

Other eds.
7585,27
etc.

ADVERTISEMENT.

"FEW *books have been peruſed by me with greater pleaſure than his* Improvement of the Mind, *of which the radical principles may indeed be found in* LOCKE's Conduct of the Underſtanding; *but they are ſo expanded and ramified by* WATTS, *as to confer on him the merit of a work in the higheſt degree uſeful and pleaſing. Whoever has the care of inſtructing others, may be charged with deficience in his duty, if this book is not recommended."*

Dr. JOHNSON's Life of Dr. WATTS.

THE

PREFACE.

IN the laſt page of the Treatiſe of Logic which I publiſhed many years ago, it is obſerved, that there are ſeveral other things which might aſſiſt the cultivation of the mind, and its improvement in knowledge, which are not uſually repreſented among the principles or precepts of that art or ſcience. Theſe are the ſubjects which compoſe this book; theſe are the ſentiments and rules, many of which I had then in view, and which I now venture into public light.

The preſent treatiſe, if it may aſſume the honour of that name, is made up of a variety of remarks and directions for the improvement of the mind in uſeful knowledge. It was collected from the obſervations which I had made on my own ſtudies, and on the temper and ſentiments, the humour and conduct of other men in their purſuit of learning, or in the affairs of life; and it has been conſiderably aſſiſted by occaſional collections in the courſe of my reading, from many authors and on different ſubjects. I confeſs, in far the greateſt part I ſtand bound to anſwer for the weakneſſes or defects that will be found in theſe papers, not being able to point to other writers, whence the twentieth part of them is derived.

The work was compoſed at different times, and by ſlow degrees. Now and then, indeed, it ſpread itſelf into branches and leaves like a plant in April, and advanced ſeven or eight pages in a weak; and ſometimes it lay by without growth, like a vegetable in the winter, and did not increaſe half ſo much in the revolution of a year.

As theſe thoughts occurred to me in reading or meditation, or in my notices of the various appearances of things among mankind, they were thrown under thoſe heads which make the preſent titles of the chapters, and were by degrees reduced to ſomething like a method, ſuch as the ſubject would admit.

On theſe accounts it is not to be expected that the ſame accurate order ſhould be obſerved either in the whole book, or in the particular chapters thereof, which is neceſſary in the ſyſtem of any ſcience, whoſe ſcheme is projected at once. A book which has been twenty years a writing, may be indulged in ſome variety of ſtyle and manner, though I hope there will not be found any great difference of ſentiment; for wherein I had improved in later years beyond what I had firſt written, a few daſhes and alterations have corrected the miſtakes; and if the candour of the reader will but allow what is defective in one place, to be ſupplied by additions from another, I hope there will be found a ſufficient reconciliation of what might ſeem at firſt to be ſcarcely conſiſtent.

The language and dreſs of theſe ſentiments is ſuch as the preſent temper of mind dictated, whether it were grave or pleaſant, ſevere or ſmiling. If there has been any thing expreſſed with too much ſeverity, I ſuſpect it will be found to fall upon thoſe ſneering or daring writers of the age againſt religion, and againſt the chriſtian ſcheme, who ſeemed to have left reaſon, or decency, or both, behind them in ſome of their writings.

The ſame apology of the length of years in compoſing this book may ſerve alſo to excuſe a repetition of the ſame ſentiments which may happen to be found in different places without the author's deſign; but in other pages it was intended, ſo that thoſe rules for the conduct of the underſtanding which are moſt neceſſary, ſhould be ſet in ſeveral lights, that they might with more frequency and more force impreſs the ſoul. I ſhall be ſufficiently ſatisfied with the good humour and lenity of my readers, if they will pleaſe to regard theſe papers as parcels of imperfect ſketches, which were deſigned by a ſudden pencil, and in a thouſand leiſure moments, to be one day collected into landſkips of ſome little proſpects in the regions of learning, and in the world of common life, point out the faireſt and moſt fruitful ſpots, as well as the rocks and wilderneſſes, and faithleſs moraſſes of the country. But I feel age advancing upon me, and my health is inſufficient to perfect what I had deſigned, to increaſe and amplify theſe remarks, to confirm and improve theſe rules, and to illuminate the ſeveral pages with a richer and more beautiful variety of examples. The ſubject is almoſt endleſs, and new writers in the preſent and following ages may ſtill find ſufficient follies, weakneſſes, and dangers among mankind, to be repreſented in ſuch a manner as to guard youth againſt them.

Theſe hints, ſuch as they are, I hope may be rendered ſome way uſeful to perſons in younger years, who will favour them with a peruſal, and who would ſeek the cultivation of their own underſtandings in the early days of life. Perhaps they may find ſomething here which may awake a latent genius, and direct the ſtudies of a willing mind. Perhaps it may point out to a ſtudent, now and then, what may employ the moſt uſeful labours of his thoughts, and accelerate his diligence in the moſt momentous inquiries. Perhaps a ſprightly youth may here meet with ſomething to guard or warn him againſt miſtakes, and withhold him at other times from thoſe purſuits which are like to be fruitleſs and diſappointing.

Let it be obſerved alſo, that in our age ſeveral of the ladies purſue ſcience with ſucceſs; and others of them are deſirous of improving their reaſon even in common affairs of life, as well as the men; yet the characters which are here drawn occaſionally, are almoſt univerſally applied to one ſex; but if any of the other ſhall find a character which ſuits them, they may, by a ſmall change of the termination, apply and aſſume it to themſelves, and accept the inſtruction, the admonition, or the applauſe which is deſigned in it.

There is yet another thing which it is neceſſary my reader ſhould be informed of; but whether he will call it fortunate or unhappy, I know not. It is ſufficiently evident that the book conſiſts of two parts; the firſt lays down remarks and rules how we may attain uſeful knowledge ourſelves; and the ſecond, how we may beſt communicate it to others. Theſe were both deſigned to be printed in this volume; but a manuſcript which hath been near twenty years in hand, may be eaſily ſuppoſed to allow of ſuch difference in the hand writing, ſo many lines altered, ſo many things interlined, and ſo many paragraphs and pages here and there inſerted, that it was not eaſy to compute the number of ſheets that it would make in print; and it now appears, that the remarks and rules about the communication of knowledge being excluded here, they muſt be left to another volume; wherein will be contained various obſervations relating to methods of inſtruction, the ſtyle and manner of it, the way of convincing other perſons, of guarding youth againſt prejudices, of treating and managing the prejudices of men, of the uſe and abuſe of authority, of education, and of the various things in which children and youth ſhould be inſtructed, of their proper buſineſs and diverſions, and of the degrees of liberty and reſtraint therein, &c. Of all which I had once deſigned a more complete treatiſe; but my years advancing, I now deſpair to finiſh it.

The eſſays or chapters on theſe ſubjects being already written, if I am favoured with a tolerable degree of health, will be put to the preſs, when the favourable acceptance of this *firſt part* ſhall give ſufficient encouragement to proceed.

CONTENTS.

PART FIRST.

DIRECTIONS FOR THE ATTAINMENT OF USEFUL KNOWLEDGE.

Page

INTRODUCTION, 1

Chap. I. *General Rules for the Improvement of Knowledge,* 4

Chap. II. *Obſervation, Reading, Inſtruction by Lectures, Converſation and Study compared,* 17

Chap. III. *Rules relating to Obſervation,* 27

Chap. IV. *Of Reading of Books,* 33

Chap. V. *Judgment of Books,* 43

Chap. VI. *Of living inſtructions and Lectures, of Teachers and Learners,* 54

Chap. VII, *Of Learning a Language,* 58

Chap. VIII. *Of inquiring into the Senſe and Meaning of any Writer or Speaker, and eſpecially the Senſe of the ſacred Writings,* 66

Chap. IX. *Rules of Improvement by Converſation,* 69

Chap. X. *Of Diſputes,* 83

Chap. XI. *The Socratical Way of Diſputation,* 93

Chap. XIII. *Of Forenſic Diſputes,* 96

Chap. XII. *Of Academic or Scholaſtic Diſputation,* 98

Chap. XIV. *Of Study, or Meditation,* 107

Chap. XV. *Of fixing the Attention,* 117

Chap. XVI. *Of Enlarging the Capacity of the Mind,* 120

Chap. XVII. *Of improving the Memory,* 136
Chap. XVIII. *Of determining a Queſtion,* 155
Chap. XIX. *Of inquiring into Cauſes and Effects,* 171
Chap. XX. *Of the Sciences, and their Uſe in particular Profeſſions,* 175

PART SECOND.

COMMUNICATION OF USEFUL KNOWLEDGE.

Page
PREFACE, iii
Introduction, 1
Chap. I. *Methods of Teaching and Reading Lectures,* 2
Chap. II. *Of an Inſtructive Style,* 8
Chap. III. *Of Convincing other Perſons of any Truth; or delivering them from Errours and Miſtakes,* 13
Chap. IV. *Of Authority, of the Abuſe of it, and of its real and proper Uſe and Service,* 19
Chap. V. *Of Treating and Managing the Prejudices of Men.* 28
Chap. VI. *Of Inſtruction by Preaching,* 36
Sect. I. *Wiſdom better than Learning in the Pulpit,* *ib.*
Sect. II. *A Branching Sermon,* 41
Sect. III. *The Harangue,* 42
Chap. VII. *Of writing Books for the Public,* 47
Chap. VIII. *Of Writing and Reading Controverſies,* 51
Sect. I. *Of Writing Controverſies,* *ib.*
Sect. II. *Of Reading Controverſies,* 53

A DISCOURSE.

ON THE EDUCATION OF YOUTH.

Page

INTRODUCTION, 59

Sect. I. *Of Inſtructing Children in Religion,* 61

Sect. II. *The Exerciſe and Improvement of their Natural Powers,* 64

Sect. III. *Self Government,* 71

Sect. IV. *The common Arts of Reading and Writing,* 78

Sect. V. *Of a Trade or Employment,* 80

Sect. VI. *Rules of Prudence,* 84

Sect. VII. *The Ornaments and Accompliſhments of Life,* 86

Sect. VIII. *A Guard againſt evil Influences from Perſons and Things,* 94

Sect. IX. *A Guard ſet on the Sports and Diverſions of Children,* 97

Sect. X. *Of the proper Degrees of Liberty and Reſtraint in the Education of a Son, illuſtrated by Examples,* 112

Sect. XI. *Of the proper Degrees of Liberty and Reſtraint in the Education of Daughters, illuſtrated by Examples,* 124

THE

IMPROVEMENT OF THE MIND.

PART FIRST.

CONTAINING A VARIETY OF

REMARKS AND RULES

FOR THE

Attainment and Communication of Uſeful Knowledge,
in Religion, in the Sciences, and
in common Life.

PRINTED AT EXETER, NEWHAMPSHIRE,
BY *J. LAMSON,* AND *T. ODIORNE,*
FOR DAVID WEST, N°. 36, MARLBORO' STREET,
BOSTON.

THE IMPROVEMENT OF THE MIND.

PART I.

Directions for the Attainment of Uſeful Knowledge.

INTRODUCTION.

NO man is obliged to learn and know every thing; this can neither be ſought nor required, for it is utterly impoſſible; yet all perſons are under ſome obligations to improve their own underſtanding, otherwiſe it will be a barren deſert, or a foreſt overgrown with weeds and brambles. Univerſal ignorance or infinite errours will overſpread the mind, which is utterly neglected and lies without cultivation.

Skill in the ſciences is indeed the buſineſs and profeſſion but of a ſmall part of mankind; but there are many others placed in ſuch an exalted rank in the world, as allows them much leiſure and large opportunities to cultivate their reaſon, and to beautify and enrich their minds with various knowledge. Even the lower orders of men have particular callings in life, wherein they ought to acquire a juſt degree of ſkill, and this is not to be done well without thinking and reaſoning about them.

The common duties and benefits of ſociety, which belong to every man living, as we are ſocial creatures, and even our native and neceſſary relations to a family, a neighbourhood, or a government, oblige all perſons whatever to uſe their reaſoning powers upon a thouſand occaſions; every hour of life calls for ſome regular exerciſe of our judgment as to times and things, perſons and actions; without a prudent and diſcreet determination in matters before us, we ſhall be plunged into perpetual errours in our conduct. Now that which ſhould always be practiſed muſt, at ſome time, be learnt.

Beſides, every ſon and daughter of ADAM has a moſt important concern in the affairs of a life to come, and therefore it is a matter of the higheſt moment for every one to underſtand, to judge, and to reaſon right about the things of religion. It is in vain for any to ſay, we have no leiſure or time for it. The daily intervals of time, and vacancies from neceſſary labour, together with the one day in ſeven in the chriſtian world, allows ſufficient time for this, if men would but apply themſelves to it with half as much zeal and diligence, as they do to the trifles and amuſements of this life; and it would turn to infinitely better account.

Thus it appears to be the neceſſary duty and the intereſt of every perſon living, to improve his underſtanding, to inform his judgment, to treaſure up uſeful knowledge, and to acquire the ſkill of good reaſoning, as far as his ſtation, capacity, and circumſtances furniſh him with proper means for it. Our miſtakes in judgment may plunge us into much folly and guilt in practice. By acting without thought or reaſon, we diſhonour God, who made us reaſonable creatures; we often become injurious to our neighbours, kindred, or friends, and we bring ſin and miſery upon ourſelves; for we are accountable to God our judge for every part of our irregular and miſtaken conduct, where he hath given us ſufficient advantages to guard againſt thoſe miſtakes.

It is the deſign of logic to give this improvement to the mind, and to teach us the right uſe of reaſon in the acquirement and communication of all uſeful knowledge; though the greateſt part of writers on that ſubject have turned it into a compoſition of hard words, trifles, and ſubtilties for the mere uſe of the ſchools, and only to amuſe the ears and the minds of men with empty ſounds, which flatter their vanity and puff up their pride with pompous and glittering ſhow of falſe learning; and thus they have prevented the great and valuable deſign of that ſcience.

A few modern writers have endeavoured to recover the honour of logic, ſince that excellent writer of the Art of Thinking led the way. Among the reſt I have preſumed to make an attempt of the ſame kind, in a little treatiſe publiſhed ſeveral years ago; wherein it was my conſtant aim to aſſiſt the reaſoning powers of every rank and order of men, as well as to keep an eye to the beſt intereſt of the ſchools, and to the candidates of true learning. There I have endeavoured to ſhow the miſtakes we are expoſed to in our conception, judgment, and reaſoning; and pointed out the various ſprings of them. I have alſo laid down many general and particular rules how to eſcape errour, and attain truth in matters of the civil and religious life, as well as in the ſciences.

But there are ſeveral other obſervations very pertinent to this purpoſe, which have not fallen ſo directly under any of thoſe heads of diſcourſe, or at leaſt they would have ſwelled that treatiſe to an improper ſize; therefore I have made a diſtinct collection of them here, out of ſeveral authors, as well as from my own obſervation, and ſet them down under the following heads.

The learned world, who has done ſo much unmerited honour to that logical treatiſe, as to receive it into our flouriſhing univerſities, may poſſibly admit this as a ſecond part or ſuppliment to that treatiſe; and I may venture to perſuade myſelf, that if the common and buſy ranks of mankind, as well as the ſcholar and the gentleman, would but tranſcribe ſuch rules into their underſtanding, and practiſe them on all occaſions, there would be much more truth and knowledge found among men; and it is reaſonable to hope that juſtice, virtue, and goodneſs would attend the happy conſequents.

CHAP. I.

General Rules for the Improvement of Knowledge.[*]

I. RULE.

DEEPLY poſſeſs your mind with the vaſt importance of a good judgment, and the rich and ineſtimable advantage of right reaſoning. Review the inſtances of your own miſconduct in life; think ſeriouſly with yourſelves how many follies and ſorrows you had eſcaped, and how much guilt and miſery you had prevented, if from your early years you had but taken due pains to judge aright concerning perſons, times, and things. This will awaken you with lively vigour to addreſs yourſelves to the work of improving your reaſoning powers, and of ſeizing every opportunity and advantage for that end.

II. *Rule.* CONSIDER the weakneſſes, frailties, and miſtakes of human nature in general, which ariſe from the very conſtitution of a ſoul united to an animal body, and ſubjected to many inconveniences thereby. Conſider the many additional weakneſſes, miſtakes, and frailties, which are derived from our original apoſtacy and fall from a ſtate of innocence; how much our powers of underſtanding are yet more darkened, enfeebled, and impoſed on by our ſenſes, our fancies, and our unruly paſſions, &c. Conſider the depth and difficulty of many truths and the flattering appearances of falſehood, whence ariſe an infinite number of dangers to which we are expoſed in our judgment of things. Read with greedineſs thoſe authors who treat of the doctrine of prejudices, prepoſſeſſions, and ſprings of errour, on purpoſe to make your ſoul watchful on all ſides, that it ſuffer not itſelf as far as poſſible to be impoſed on by any of them. See more on this ſubject, Logic, Part II. Chap. 3. and Part III. Chap. 3.

---

[*] *Though the moſt of theſe following rules are chiefly addreſſed to thoſe whom their fortune or their ſtation require to addict themſelves to the peculiar improvement of their minds in greater degrees of knowledge, yet every one, who has leiſure and opportunity to be acquainted with ſuch writings as theſe, may find ſomething among them for their own uſe.*

III. *Rule.* A ſlight view of things ſo momentous is not ſufficient. You ſhould therefore contrive and practiſe ſome proper methods to acquaint yourſelf with your own ignorance, and to impreſs your mind with a deep and painful ſenſe of the low and imperfect degrees of your preſent knowledge, that you may be incited with labour and activity to purſue after greater meaſures. Among others you may find ſome ſuch methods as theſe, ſucceſsful.

1. Take a wide ſurvey now and then of the vaſt unlimited regions of learning. Let your meditations run over all the names of the ſciences, with their numerous branchings, and innumerable particular themes of knowledge; and then reflect how few of them you are acquainted with in any tolerable degree. The moſt learned of mortals will never find occaſion to act over again what is fabled of ALEXANDER the Great, that when he had conquered what was called the Eaſtern world, he wept for want of more worlds to conquer. The worlds of ſcience are immenſe and endleſs.

2. Think what a numberleſs variety of queſtions and difficulties there are belonging even to that particular ſcience, in which you have made the greateſt progreſs, and how few of them there are in which you have arrived at a final and undoubted certainty; excepting only thoſe queſtions in the pure and ſimple mathematics, whoſe theorems are demonſtrable and leave ſcarcely any doubt; and yet, even in the purſuit of ſome of theſe, mankind have been ſtrangely bewildered.

3. Spend a few thoughts ſometimes on the puzzling inquiries, concerning vacuums and atoms in geometry, wherein there appear ſome inſolvable difficulties. Do this on purpoſe to give you a more ſenſible impreſſion of the poverty of your underſtanding, and of the imperfection of your knowledge. This will teach you what a vain thing it is to fancy that you know all things; and will inſtruct you to think modeſtly of your preſent attainments, when every duſt of the earth, and every inch of empty ſpace, ſurmounts your underſtanding and triumphs over your preſumption. ARITHMO had been bred up to accounts all his life, and thought himſelf complete maſter of numbers. But when he was puſhed hard to give the ſquare root of the number 2, he tried at it, and laboured long in milleſimal fractions, until he confeſſed there was no end of

the inquiry; and yet he learnt ſo much modeſty by this perplexing queſtion that he was afraid to ſay, it was an impoſſible thing. It is ſome good degree of improvement, when we are afraid to be poſitive.

4. Read the accounts of thoſe vaſt treaſures of knowledge, which ſome of the dead have poſſeſſed, and ſome of the living do poſſeſs. Read and be aſtoniſhed at the almoſt incredible advances which have been made in ſcience. Acquaint yourſelves with ſome perſons of great learning, that, by converſe amongſt them, and by comparing yourſelves with them, you may acquire a mean opinion of your own attainments, and may thereby be animated with new zeal, to equal them as far as poſſible, or to exceed; thus let your diligence be quickened by a generous and laudable emulation. If VANILLUS had never met with SCITORIO and POLYDES, he had never imagined himſelf a mere novice in philoſophy, nor ever ſet himſelf to ſtudy in good earneſt.

Remember this, that if, upon ſome few ſuperficial acquirements, you value, exalt, and ſwell yourſelf as though you were a man of learning already, you are thereby building a moſt unpaſſable barrier againſt all improvement; you will lie down and indulge idleneſs, and reſt yourſelf contented in the midſt of deep and ſhameful ignorance. *Multi ad ſcientiam perveniſſent ſi ſe illuc perveniſſe non putaſſent.*

IV. *Rule.* PRESUME not too much upon a bright genius, a ready wit, and good parts; for this without labour and ſtudy will never make a man of knowledge and wiſdom. This has been an unhappy temptation to perſons of a vigorous and gay fancy, to deſpiſe learning and ſtudy. They have been acknowledged to ſhine in an aſſembly, and ſparkle in diſcourſe upon common topics, and thence they took it into their heads to abandon reading and labour, and grow old in ignorance; but, when they had loſt the vivacities of animal nature and youth, they became ſtupid and ſottiſh, even to contempt and ridicule. LUCIDAS and SCINTILLO are young men of this ſtamp; they ſhine in converſation, ſpread their native riches before the ignorant, pride themſelves in their own lively images of fancy, and imagine themſelves wiſe and learned; but they had beſt avoid the preſence of the ſkilful and the teſt of reaſoning; and I would adviſe them once a day to think forward a little, what a contemptible figure they will make in age.

The witty men ſometimes have ſenſe enough to know their own foible, therefore they craftily ſhun the attacks of argument, or boldly pretend to deſpiſe and renounce them, becauſe they are conſcious of their own ignorance, and inwardly confeſs their want of acquaintance with the ſkill of reaſoning.

V. *Rule.* As you are not to fancy yourſelf a learned man becauſe you are bleſſed with a ready wit, ſo neither muſt you imagine that large and laborious reading, and a ſtrong memory, can denominate you truly wiſe.

What that excellent critic has determined when he decided the queſtion, whether wit or ſtudy makes the beſt poet, may well be applied to every ſort of learning———

———Ergo nec ſtudium ſine divite vena
Nec crude quid proſit, video, ingenium: alterius ſic
Altera poſcit opem res, et conjurat amice.
HOR. de Art Poet. 409

ENGLISH.

Concerning poets there has been conteſt,
Whether they're made by art, or nature beſt;
But if I may preſume in this affair,
Among the reſt my judgment to declare,
No art without a genius will avail,
And parts without the help of art will fail;
But both ingredients jointly muſt unite,
Or verſe will never ſhine with a tranſcendent light.
OLDHAM.

It is meditation and ſtudious thought; it is the exerciſe of your own reaſon and judgment upon all you read, that gives good ſenſe even to the beſt genius, and affords your underſtanding the trueſt improvement. A boy of ſtrong memory may repeat a whole book of EUCLID, yet be no geometritian, for he may not be able perhaps to demonſtrate one ſingle theorem. MEMORINO has learnt half the bible by heart, and is become a living concordance and a ſpeaking index to the theological folios, and yet he underſtands little of divinity.

A well furniſhed library and a capacious memory are indeed of ſingular uſe towards the improvement of the mind; but, if all your learning be nothing elſe but a mere amaſſment of what others have written, without a due penetration into their meaning, and without a judicious choice and determination of your own ſentiments, I do not ſee what title your head has to true learning above your ſhelves. Though you have read philoſophy and theology, morals and mataphyſics in abundance, and every other art and ſcience, yet if your memory is the only faculty employed, with the neglect of your reaſoning powers, you can juſtly claim no higher character but that of a good hiſtorian of the ſciences.

Here note, that many of the foregoing advices are more peculiarly proper for thoſe who are conceited of their abilities, and are ready to entertain a high opinion of themſelves. But a modeſt humble youth, of a good genius, ſhould not ſuffer himſelf to be diſcouraged by any of theſe conſiderations. They are deſigned only as a ſpur to diligence, and a guard againſt vanity and pride.

VI. *Rule.* Be not ſo weak as to imagine a life of learning a life of lazineſs and eaſe; nor give yourſelf to any of the learned profeſſions, unleſs you are reſolved to labour hard at ſtudy, and can make it your delight and the joy of your life, according to the motto of our late Lord Chancellor King,

Labor ipſe voluptas.

It is no idle thing indeed to be a ſcholar. A man, much addicted to luxury and pleaſure, recreation and paſtime, ſhould never pretend to devote himſelf entirely to the ſciences, unleſs his ſoul be ſo reformed and refined, that he can taſte all theſe entertainments eminently in his cloſet, among his books and papers. Sobrino is a temperate man and a philoſopher, and he feeds on partridge and pheaſant, veniſon and ragouts, and every delicacy, in a growing underſtanding, and a ſerene and healthy ſoul, though he dines on a diſh of ſprouts or turnips. Languinus loved his eaſe, and therefore choſe to be brought up a ſcholar. He had much inſolence in his temper, and, as he never cared for ſtudy, he falls under univerſal contempt in his profeſſion, becauſe he has nothing but the gown and the name.

VII. Let the hope of new diſcoveries, as well as the ſatisfaction and pleaſure of known truths, animate your daily induſtry. Do not think learning in general is arrived at its perfection, or that the knowledge of any particular ſubject in any ſcience cannot be improved, merely becauſe it has lain five hundred, or a thouſand years, without improvement. The preſent age, by the bleſſing of God on the ingenuity and diligence of men, has brought to light ſuch truths in natural philoſophy, and ſuch diſcoveries in the heavens and the earth, as ſeemed to be beyond the reach of man. But may there not be Sir ISAAC NEWTONS in every ſcience? You ſhould never deſpair therefore of finding out that which has never yet been found, unleſs you ſee ſomething in the nature of it which renders it unſearchable, and above the reach of our faculties.

Nor ſhould a ſtudent in divinity imagine that our age is arrived at a full underſtanding of every thing which can be known by the ſcriptures. Every age, ſince the reformation, has thrown ſome further light on difficult texts and paragraphs of the bible, which have been long obſcured by the early riſe of antichriſt; and ſince there are at preſent many difficulties and darkneſſes hanging about certain truths of the chriſtian religion, and ſince ſeveral of theſe relate to important doctrines, ſuch as the *Original Sin*, the *Fall of Adam*, the *Perſon of Chriſt*, the *Bleſſed Trinity*, and the *Decrees of God*, &c. which ſtill embarraſs the minds of honeſt and inquiring readers, and which make work for noiſy controverſy. It is certain there are ſeverel things in the bible yet unknown, and not ſufficiently explained, and it is certain that there is ſome way to ſolve theſe difficulties, and to reconcile theſe ſeeming contradictions. Why may not a ſincere ſearcher of truth in the preſent age, by labour, diligence, ſtudy, and prayer, with the beſt uſe of his reaſoning powers, find out the proper ſolution of thoſe knots and perplexities, which have hitherto been unſolved, and which have afforded matter for angry quarrelling? Happy is every man who ſhall be favoured of heaven to give a helping hand towards that introduction of the bleſſed age of light and love.

VIII. Do not hover always on the ſurface of things, nor take up ſuddenly with mere appearances; but penetrate into the depths of matters, as far as your time and circumſtances allow, eſpecially in thoſe things which relate to your profeſſion. Indulge not yourſelves to judge of things by the firſt glimpſe, or by a ſhort and ſuperficial view of them; for this will fill the mind with errours and prejudices, and give it a wrong turn and ill habit of thinking, and make much work for retraction. SUBITO is carried away with title pages, ſo that he ventures to pronounce upon a large octavo at once, and to recommend it wonderfully when he had read half the preface. Another volume of controverſy, of equal ſize, was diſcarded by him at once, becauſe he pretended to treat of the Trinity, yet could neither find the word eſſence nor ſubſiſtences in the twelve firſt pages; but SUBITO changes his opinions of men, books, and things ſo often, nobody regards him.

As for theſe ſciences, or thoſe parts of knowledge, which either your profeſſion, your leiſure, your inclination, or your incapacity, forbid you to purſue with much application, or to ſearch far into them, you muſt be contented with an hiſtorical and ſuperficial knowledge of them, and not pretend to form many judgments of your own on thoſe ſubjects which you underſtand very imperfectly.

IX. ONCE a day, eſpecially in the early years of life and ſtudy, call yourſelves to an account what new ideas, new propoſition or truth you have gained, what further confirmation of known truths, and what advances you have made in any part of knowledge ; and let no day if poſſible paſs away without ſome intellectual gain ; ſuch a courſe, well purſued, muſt certainly advance us in uſeful knowledge. It is a wiſe proverb among the learned, borrowed from the lips and practice of a celebrated painter, *nulla dies ſine linea* ; *let no day paſs without a line at leaſt* ; and it was a ſacred rule among the Pythagoreans, that they ſhould, every evening, thrice run over the actions and affairs of the day, and examine what their conduct had been, what the had done, or what they had neglected ; and they aſſured their pupils, that by this method they would make a noble progreſs in the path of virtue.

Nor let ſoft ſlumber cloſe your eyes,
Before you've recollected, thrice,
The train of actions through the day ;
Where have my feet choſe out the way ?
What have I learnt, where'er I've been,
From all I've heard, from all I've ſeen ?
What know I more that's worth the knowing ?
What have I done that's worth the doing ?
What have I ſought that I ſhould ſhun ?

What duty have I left undone;
Or into what new follies run?
Theſe ſelf inquiries are the road
That leads to virtue and to God.

I would be glad among a nation of chriſtians, to find young men heartily engaged in the practice of what this heathen writer teaches.

X. MAINTAIN a conſtant watch at all times againſt a dogmatical ſpirit; fix not your aſſent to any propoſition in a firm and unalterable manner, till you have ſome unalterable ground for it, and till you have arrived at ſome clear and ſure evidence; till you have turned the propoſition on all ſides, and ſearched the matter through and through, ſo that you cannot be miſtaken. And even where you may think you have full grounds of aſſurance, be not too early nor too frequent, in expreſſing this aſſurance in too peremptory and poſitive a manner, remembering that human nature is always liable to miſtake in this corrupt and feeble ſtate. A dogmatical ſpirit has many inconveniences attending it; as,

1. It ſtops the ear againſt all further reaſoning upon that ſubject, and ſhuts up the mind from all further improvements of knowledge. If you have reſolutely fixed your opinion, though it be upon too ſlight and inſufficient grounds, yet you will ſtand determined to renounce the ſtrongeſt reaſon brought for the contrary opinion, and grow obſtinate againſt the force of the cleareſt argument. POSITIVO is a man of this character, and has often pronounced his aſſurance of the Carteſian vortexes. Laſt year ſome further light broke in upon his underſtanding, with uncontrolable force, by reading ſomething of mathematical philoſophy; yet, having aſſerted his former opinions in a moſt confident manner, he is tempted now to wink a little againſt the truth, or to prevaricate in his diſcourſe upon that ſubject, leſt, by admitting conviction, he ſhould expoſe himſelf to the neceſſity of confeſſing his former folly and miſtake; and he has not humility enough for that.

2. A dogmatical ſpirit naturally leads us to arrogance of mind, and gives a man ſome airs in converſation, which are too haughty and aſſuming. AUDENS is a man of learning, and very good company, but his infallible aſſurance renders his carriage ſometimes inſupportable.

3. A dogmatical ſpirit inclines a man to be cenſorious of his neighbours. Every one of his opinions appears to him written as it were with ſun beams, and he grows angry that his neighbour does not ſee it in the ſame light. He is tempted to diſdain his correſpondents as men of a low and dark underſtanding, becauſe they will not believe what he does. FURIO goes farther in this wild track, and charges thoſe who refuſe his notions, with wilful obſtinacy and vile hypocriſy; he tells them boldly, that they reſiſt the truth, and ſin againſt their conſciences.

Theſe are the men, that when they deal in controverſy, delight in reproaches. They abound in toſſing about abſurdity and ſtupidity among their brethren They caſt the imputation of hereſy and nonſenſe plentifully upon their antagoniſts; and, in matters of ſacred importance, they deal out their anathemas in abundance upon chriſtians better than themſelves! They denounce damnation upon their neighbours without either juſtice or mercy, and when they pronounce ſentences of divine wrath againſt ſuppoſed heretics, they add their own human fire and indignation. A dogmatiſt in religion is not a great way off from a bigot, and is in high danger of growing up to be a bloody perſecutor.

XI. THOUGH caution and ſlow aſſent will guard you againſt frequent miſtakes and retractions, yet you ſhould get humility and courage enough to retract any miſtake, and confeſs an errour; frequent changes are tokens of levity, in our determinations; yet you ſhould never be too proud to change your opinion, nor frighted at the name of a changeling, Learn to ſcorn thoſe vulgar bugbears which confirm fooliſh man in his old miſtakes, for fear of being charged with inconſtancy. I confeſs it is better not to judge, than to judge falſely, and it is wiſer to withhold our aſſent till we ſee complete evidence; but if we have too ſuddenly given our aſſent as the wiſer man does ſometimes, if we have profeſſed what we find afterwards to be falſe, we ſhould never be aſhamed nor afraid to renounce a miſtake. That is a noble eſſay which is found among the occaſional papers, to encourage the world to practiſe retractions; and I would recommend it to the peruſal of every ſcholar and every chriſtian.

XII. HE that would raiſe his judgment above the vulgar rank of mankind, and learn to paſs a juſt ſentence on perſons and things, muſt take heed of a fanciful temper of mind, and a humorous conduct in his affairs. Fancy and humour early and conſtantly indulged, may expect an old age over run with follies.

The notion of a humoriſt is, one that is greatly pleaſed or greatly diſpleaſed with little things, who ſets his heart much upon matters of very ſmall importance, who has his will determined every day by trifles, his actions ſeldom directed by the reaſon and nature of things, and his paſſions frequently raiſed by things of little moment. Where this practice is allowed, it will inſenſibly warp the judgment to pronounce little things great, and tempt you to lay a great weight upon them. In ſhort, this temper will incline you to paſs an unjuſt value on almoſt every thing that occurs; and every ſtep that you take in this path is juſt ſo far out of the way to wiſdom.

XIII. For the ſame reaſon have a care of trifling with things important and momentous, or ~~with~~ ſporting with things awful and ſacred; do not indulge a ſpirit of ridicule, as ſome witty men do on all occaſions and ſubjects. This will as unhappily bias the judgment on the other ſide, and incline you to paſs a low eſteem on the moſt valuable objects. Whatſoever evil habit we indulge in practice, it will inſenſibly obtain a power over our underſtanding, and betray us into many errours. Jocander is ready with his jeſt to anſwer every thing that he hears; he reads books in the ſame jovial humour, and has got the art of turning every thought and ſentence into merriment. How many awkward and irregular judgments does this man paſs upon ſolemn ſubjects, even when he deſigns to be grave and in earneſt? His mirth and laughing humour is formed into habit and temper, and leads his underſtanding ſhamefully aſtray. You will ſee him wandering in purſuit of a gay flying feather; and is drawn by a ſort of *ignis fatuus* into bogs and mire almoſt every day of his life.

XIV. Ever maintain a virtuous and pious frame of ſpirit; for an indulgence of vicious inclinations debaſes the underſtanding and perverts the judgment. 'Whoredom and wine and new wine, take away the heart' and ſoul and reaſon of a man. Senſuality ruins the better faculties of the mind; an indulgence to appetite and paſſion enfeebles the powers of reaſon, it makes the judgment weak and ſuſceptive of every falſehood, and eſpecially of ſuch miſtakes as have a tendency towards the gratification of the animal; and it warps the ſoul aſide ſtrangely from that ſtedfaſt honeſty and integrity that neceſſarily belongs to the purſuit of truth. It is the virtuous man who is in a fair way to wiſdom. "God gives to thoſe that are good in his ſight, wiſdom, and knowledge, and joy," Eccl. ii. 26.

Piety towards God, as well as ſobriety and virtue, are neceſſary qualifications to make a truly wiſe and judicious man. He that abandons religion muſt act in ſuch a contradiction to his own conſcience and beſt judgment, that he abuſes and ſpoils the faculty itſelf. It is thus in the nature of things, and it is thus by the righteous judgment of God; even the pretended ſages among the heathens, who did not like to retain God in their knowledge, they were given up to a reprobate mind, an undiſtinguiſhing or injudicious mind,' ſo that they judged inconſiſtently, and practiſed mere abſurdities.

And it is the character of the ſlaves to antichriſt, 2 Theſſ. ii. 10. &c. that thoſe "who receive not the love of the truth, were expoſed to the power of diabolical ſleights and lying wonders." When divine revelation ſhines and blazes in the face of men with glorious evidence, and they wink their eyes againſt it, the God of this world is ſuffered to blind them even in the moſt obvious, common, and ſenſible things. The great God of heaven, for this cauſe, 'ſends them ſtrong deluſions that they ſhould believe a lie;' and the nonſenſe of tranſubſtantiation, in the popiſh world, is a moſt glaring accompliſhment of this prophecy, beyond ever what could have been thought of, or expected among creatures who pretend to reaſon.

XV. WATCH againſt the pride of your own reaſon, and a vain conceit of your intellectual powers, with the neglect of divine aid and bleſſing. Preſume not upon great attainments in knowledge by your own ſelf ſufficiency: Thoſe who truſt to their own underſtanding entirely are pronounced fools in he word of God: And it is the wiſeſt of men gives them this character, 'he that truſteth in his own heart is a fool,' Prov. xxviii. 26. And the ſame divine writer adviſes us to 'truſt in the Lord with all our heart, and not to lean to our own underſtandings, nor to be wiſe in our own eyes," Chap. iii. 5, 7.

Thoſe who, with a neglect of religion, and dependence upon God, apply themſelves to ſearch out every article in the things of God by the mere dint of their own reaſon, have been ſuffered to run into wild exceſſes of foolery, and ſtrange extravagance of opinions. Every one who purſues this vain courſe, and will not aſk for the conduct of God in the ſtudy of religion, has juſt reaſon to fear he ſhall be left of God, and given up a prey to a thouſand prejudices; that he ſhall be conſigned over to the follies of his own heart, and purſue his own temporal and eternal ruin. And even in common ſtudies, we ſhould by humility and dependence engage the God of truth on our ſide.

XVI. OFFER up therefore your daily requeſts to God the Father of lights, that he would bleſs all our attempts and labours in reading, ſtudy, and converſation. Think with yourſelf, how eaſily and how inſenſibly, by one turn of thought, he can lead you into a large ſcene of uſeful ideas; he can teach you to lay hold on a clew which may guide your thoughts with ſafety and eaſe through all the difficulties of an intricate ſubject. Think how eaſily the Author of your beings can direct your motions by his providence, ſo that the glance of an eye, or a word ſtriking the ear, or a ſudden turn of the fancy, ſhall conduct you to a train of happy ſentiments. By his ſecret and ſupreme method of government, he can draw you to read ſuch a treatiſe, or to converſe with ſuch a perſon, who may give you more light into ſome deep ſubject in an hour, than you could obtain by a month of your own ſolitary labour.

Think, with yourſelf, with how much eaſe the God of ſpirits can caſt into your mind ſome uſeful ſuggeſtion, and give a happy turn to your own thoughts, or the thoughts of thoſe with whom you converſe, whence you may derive unſpeakable light and ſatisfaction in a matter that has long puzzled and entangled you; he can ſhew you a 'path which the vulture's eye has not ſeen,' and lead you by ſome unknown gate or portal out of a wilderneſs and labyrinth of difficulties wherein you have been long wandering.

Implore conſtantly his divine grace to point your inclinations to proper ſtudies, and fix your heart there. He can keep off temptations on the right hand and on the left, both by the courſe of his providence, and by the ſecret and inſenſible intimations of his Spirit. He can guard your underſtanding from every evil influence of errour, and ſecure you from the danger of evil books and men, which might otherwiſe have a fatal effect, and lead you into pernicious miſtakes.

Nor let this ſort of advice fall under the cenſure of the godleſs and profane, as a mere piece of bigotry or enthuſiaſm derived from faith and the bible; for the reaſons which I have given to ſupport this pious practice of invoking the bleſſing of God on our ſtudies, are derived from the light of nature as well as revelation. He that made our ſouls and is the father of ſpirits, ſhall he not be ſuppoſed to have a moſt friendly influence towards the inſtruction and government of them? The Author of our rational powers can involve them in darkneſs when he pleaſes, by a ſudden diſtemper, or he can abandon them to wander into dark and fooliſh opinions when they are filled with a vain conceit of their own light. He expects to be acknowledged in the common affairs of life, and he does as certainly expect it in the ſuperiour operations of the mind, and in the ſearch of knowledge and truth. The very Greek heathens, and the Latins, by the light of reaſon were taught to invoke their deities. In the works of learning they thought it neceſſary to begin with God. Even the poets call on the muſe as a goddeſs to aſſiſt them in their compoſitions. The firſt lines of Homer in his Iliad, and in his Odyſſey; the firſt line of Muſeus in his ſong of Hero and Leander; the beginning of Heſiod in his poem of weeks and days; and ſeveral others, furniſh us with ſufficient examples of this kind: Nor does Ovid leave out this piece of devotion as he begins his ſtories of the Metamorphoſis. Chriſtianity ſo much the more obliges us by the precepts of ſcripture to invoke the aſſiſtance of the true God in all our labours of the mind, for the improvement of ourſelves and others. Biſhop Saunderſon ſays, that ſtudy without prayer is atheiſm, as well as, that prayer without ſtudy is preſumption. And we are ſtill more abundently encouraged by the teſtimony of thoſe who have acknowledged from their own experience, that ſincere prayer was no hinderance to their ſtudies; they have gotten more knowledge ſometimes upon their knees, than by their labour in peruſing a variety of authors; and they have left this obſervation for ſuch as follow, *Bene oraſſe eſt bene ſtuduiſſe.* Praying is the beſt ſtudying.

To conclude, let induſtry and devotion join together, and you need not doubt the happy ſucceſs, Prov. ii. 2. 'Incline thine ear to wiſdom, apply thine heart to underſtanding; cry after knowledge, and lift up thy voice; ſeek her as ſilver, and ſearch for her as for hidden treaſure: Then ſhalt thou underſtand the fear of the Lord, &c. which is the beginning of wiſdom. It is the Lord who gives wiſdom even to the ſimple, and out of his mouth cometh knowledge and underſtanding.'

CHAP. II.

Obſervations, Reading, Inſtruction by Lectures, Converſation, and Study compared.

THERE are five eminent means or methods whereby the mind is improved in the knowledge of things, and theſe are, obſervation, reading, inſtruction by lectures, converſation, and meditation; which laſt, in a moſt peculiar manner, is called ſtudy.

Let us ſurvey the general definitions or deſcriptions of them all.

I. OBSERVATION is the notice we take of all the occurrences in human life; whether they are ſenſible or intellectual, whether relating to perſons or things; to ourſelves or others. It is this that furniſhes us, even from our infancy, with a rich variety of ideas and propoſitions, words and phraſes. It is by this we know that fire will burn, that the ſun gives light, that a horſe eats graſs, that an acorn produces an oak, that man is a being capable of reaſoning and diſcourſe, that our judgment is weak, that our miſtakes are many, that our ſorrows are great, that our bodies die and are carried to the grave, and that one generation ſucceeds another. All thoſe things which we ſee, which we hear or feel, which we perceive by ſenſe or conſciouſneſs, or which we know in a direct manner, with ſcarce any exerciſe of our reflecting faculties or reaſoning powers, may be included under the general name of obſervation.

When this obſervation relates to any thing that immediately concerns ourſelves, and of which we are conſcious, it may be called experience. So that I am ſaid to know or experience that I have in myſelf a power of thinking, fearing, loving, &c. that I have appetites and paſſions working in me, and many perſonal occurrences have attended me in this life.

Oſervation includes, therefore, all that Mr. Locke means by ſenſation and reflection.

When we are ſearching out the nature or properties of any being, by various methods of trial; or, when we apply ſome active powers, or ſet ſome cauſes at work, to obſerve what effects they would produce, this ſort of obſervation is called experiment. So, when I throw a bullet into water, I find it ſinks: And, when I throw the ſame bullet into quickſilver, I ſee it ſwims: But, if I beat out this bullet into a thin hollow ſhape, then it will ſwim in the water too. So, when I ſtrike two flints togother, I find they produce fire; when I throw a ſeed into the earth, it grows up into a plant.

All theſe belong to the firſt method of knowledge, which I call obſervation.

II. READING is that mean or method of knowledge whereby 'we acquaint ourſelves with what other men have written or publiſhed to the world in their writings.' Theſe arts of reading and writing are of infinite advantage; for by them we are made partakers of the ſentiments, obſervations, reaſonings, and improvements of all the learned world, in the moſt remote nations, and in former ages, almoſt from the beginning of mankind.

III. Public or private lectures are ſuch 'verbal inſtructions as are given by a teacher while the learners attend in ſilence.' This is the way of learning religion from the pulpit, or philoſophy, or theology from the profeſſional chair; or mathematics by a teacher ſhowing us various theorems or problems, that is, ſpeculations or practices, by demonſtration and operation, with all the inſtruments of art neceſſary to thoſe operations.

IV. CONVERSATION is another method of improving our minds, wherein 'by mutual diſcourſe and inquiry, we learn the ſentiments of others, as well as communicate our ſentiments to others in the ſame manner.' Sometimes indeed, though both parties ſpeak by turns, yet the advantage is only on one ſide ; as, when a teacher and learner meet and diſcourſe together; but frequently the profit is mutual. Under this head of converſation, we may alſo rank diſputes of various kinds.

V. MEDITATION or ſtudy includes all thoſe exerciſes of the mind whereby we render all the former methods uſeful for our increaſe in true knowledge and wiſdom." It is by meditation we come to confirm our memory of things that paſs through our thoughts in the occurrences of life, in our own experiences, and in the obſervations we make. It is by meditation that we draw various inferences, and eſtabliſh in our minds general principles of knowledge. It is by meditation that we compare the various ideas which we derive from our ſenſes, or from the operations of our ſouls, and join them in propoſitions. It is by meditation that we fix in our memory whatever we learn, and form our own judgment of the truth or falſehood, the ſtrength or weakneſs, of what others ſpeak or write. It is meditation and ſtudy that draws out long chains of argument, and ſearches and finds deep and difficult truths, which before lay concealed in darkneſs.

It would be a needleſs thing to prove that our own ſolitary meditations, together with the few obſervations that moſt part of mankind are capable of making, are not ſufficient of themſelves to lead us into the attainment of any conſiderable proportion of knowledge, at leaſt in an age ſo much improved as ours is, without the aſſiſtance of converſation and reading, and other proper inſtructions that are to be attained in our day. Yet each of theſe five methods have their peculiar advantages, whereby they aſſiſt each other; and their peculiar defects, which need to be ſupplied by the other's aſſiſtance. Let us trace over ſome of the particular advantages of each.

I. One method of improving the mind is obſervation, and the advantages of it are theſe :

1. It is owing to obſervation that our 'mind is furniſhed with the firſt ſimple and complex ideas.' It is this lays the groundwork, the foundation of all knowledge, and makes us capable of uſing any other method of improving the mind ; for, if we did not attain a variety of ſenſible and intellectual ideas by the ſenſation of outwurad objects, by the conſciouſneſs of our own appetites and paſſions, pleaſures and pains, and by

inward experience of the actings of our own ſpirits, it would be impoſſible either for men or books to teach us any thing. It is obſervation that muſt give us our firſt ideas of things, as it includes in it ſenſe and conſciouſneſs.

2. All our knowledge derived from obſervation, whether it be of ſingle ideas, or of propoſitions, is knowledge gotten at firſt hand. Hereby we ſee and know things as they are, or as they appear; we take the impreſſions of them on our minds from the original objects of themſelves, which give a clearer and ſtronger conception of things; theſe ideas are more lively, and the propoſitions, at leaſt in many caſes, are much more evident. Whereas what knowledge we derive from lectures, reading, and converſation, is but the copy of other men's ideas, that is, the picture of a picture; and it is one remove further from the original.

3. Another advantage of obſervation is, that we may gain knowledge all the day long, and every moment of our lives, and every moment of our exiſtence we may be adding ſomething to our intellectual treaſures thereby, excepting only while we are aſleep; and even then the remembrance of our dreams will teach us ſome truths, and lay a foundation for a better acquaintance with human nature, both in the powers and in the frailties of it.

II. The next way of improving the mind is by reading, and the advantages of it are ſuch as theſe:

1. By reading we acquaint ourſelves in a very extenſive manner 'with the affairs, actions, and thoughts of the living and the dead, in the moſt remote nations, and in moſt diſtant ages;' and that with as much eaſe as though they lived in our own age and nation. By reading of books we may learn ſomething from all parts of mankind; whereas by obſervation we learn all from ourſelves, and only what comes within our own direct cognizance; by converſation we can only enjoy the aſſiſtance of a very few perſons, viz. thoſe who are near us, and live at the ſame time when we do, that is, our neighbours and contemporaries: But our knowledge is much more narrowed ſtill, if we confine ourſelves merely to our own ſolitary reaſonings, without much obſervation or reading: For then all our improvement muſt ariſe only from our own inward powers and meditations.

2. By reading we learn, not only the actions and the ſentiments of different nations and ages, but we transfer to ourſelves the knowledge and improvements of the 'moſt learned men, the wiſeſt and the beſt of mankind,' when or whereſoever they lived: For though many books have been written by weak and injudicious perſons, yet the moſt of thoſe books which have obtained great reputation in the world, are the products of great and wiſe men in their ſeveral ages and nations. Whereas we can obtain the converſation and inſtruction of thoſe only who are within the reach of our dwelling, or our acquaintance whether they are wiſe or unwiſe: And ſometimes that narrow ſphere ſcarcely affords any perſon of great eminence in wiſdom or learning, unleſs our inſtructor happen to have this character. And as for our own ſtudy and meditations, even when we arrive at ſome good degrees of learning, our advantage for further improvement in knowledge by them, is ſtill far more contracted than what we may derive from reading,

3. When we read good authors we learn 'the beſt, the moſt laboured, and moſt refined ſentiments even of thoſe wiſe and learned men;' for they have ſtudied hard, and have committed to writing their matureſt thoughts, and the reſult of their long ſtudy and experience: Whereas by converſation, and in ſome lectures, we obtain many times only the preſent thoughts of our tutors or friends, which, though they may be bright and uſeful, yet, at firſt perhaps, may be ſudden and indigeſted, and are mere hints which have riſen to no maturity.

4. It is another advantage of reading, that we may 'review what we have read;' we may conſult the page again and again, and meditate on it at ſucceſſive ſeaſons in our ſereneſt and retired hours, having the book always at hand; but what we obtain by converſation and in lectures, is oftentimes loſt again as ſoon as the company breaks up, or at leaſt when the day vaniſhes; unleſs we happen to have the talent of a good memory, or quickly retire and note down what remarkables we have found in thoſe diſcourſes. And for the ſame reaſon, and for want of retiring and writing, many a learned man has loſt ſeveral uſeful meditations of his own, and could never recal them again.

III. The advantages of verbal inſtructions by public or private lectures are theſe.

1. There is ſomething more ſprightly, more delightful and entertaining in the living diſcourſe of a wiſe, a learned, and

well qualified teacher, than there is in the ſilent and ſedentary practice of reading. The very turn of voice, the good pronunciation, and the polite and alluring manner which ſome teachers have attained, will engage the attention, keep the ſoul fixed, and convey and inſinuate into the mind, the ideas of things in a more lively and forcible way, than the mere reading of books in the ſilence and retirement of the cloſet.

2. A tutor or inſtructor, when he paraphraſes and explains other authors, can 'mark out the preciſe point of difficulty or controverſy,' and unfold it. He can ſhew you which paragraphs are of greateſt importance, and which are of leſs moment. He can teach his hearers what author, or what parts of an author, are beſt worth reading on any particular ſubject; and thus ſave his diſciples much time and pains by ſhortening the labours of their cloſet and private ſtudies. He can ſhow you what were the doctrines of the ancients in a compendium, which perhaps would coſt much labour and the peruſal of many books to attain. He can inform you what new doctrines or ſentiments are riſing in the world, before they come to be public; as well as acquaint you with his private thoughts, and his own experiments and obſervations, which never were, and perhaps never will be publiſhed to the world, yet may be valuable and uſeful.

3. A living inſtructor can convey to our ſenſes thoſe notions with which he would furniſh our minds, when he teaches us natural philoſophy, or moſt parts of mathematical learning. He can make the experiments before our eyes. He can deſcribe figures and diagrams, point out the lines and angles, and make out a demonſtration in a more intelligible manner by ſenſible means, which cannot be done ſo well by mere reading, even though we ſhould have the ſame figures lying in a book before our eyes. A living teacher, therefore, is a moſt neceſſary help in theſe ſtudies.

I might add alſo, that even where the ſubject of diſcourſe is moral, logical, or rhetorical, &c. and which does not come under the notice of our ſenſes, a tutor may explain his ideas by ſuch familiar examples, and plain or ſimple ſimilitudes, as ſeldom find place in books and writings.

4. When an inſtructor in his lectures deſerves any matter of difficulty, or expreſſes himſelf in ſuch a manner as ſeems obſcure, ſo that you do not take up his ideas clearly or fully, you have opportunity, at leaſt when the lecture is finiſhed, or

at other proper ſeaſons, to inquire how ſuch a ſentence ſhould be underſtood, or how ſuch a difficulty may be explained and removed.

If there be permiſſion given to free converſe with the tutor, either in the midſt of the lecture, or rather at the end of it, concerning any doubts or difficulties that occur to the hearer, this brings it very near to coverſation or diſcourſe.

IV. CONVERSATION is the next method of improvement, and it is attended with the following advantages.

I. When we converſe familiarly with a learned friend, we have his own help at hand, to explain to us every word and ſentiment that ſeems obſcure in his diſcourſe, and to inform us of his whole meaning, ſo that we are in much leſs danger of miſtaking his ſenſe; whereas in books, whatſoever is really obſcure, may alſo abide always obſcure without remedy, ſince the author is not at hand, that we may inquire his ſenſe.

If we miſtake the meaning of our friend in converſation, we are quickly ſet right again; but in reading we many times go on in the ſame miſtake, and are not capable of recovering ourſelves from it. Thence it comes to paſs, that we have ſo many conteſts in all ages about the meaning of ancient authors, and eſpecially the ſacred writers. Happy ſhould we be, could we but converſe with *Moſes*, *Iſaiah*, and *St Paul*, and conſult the prophets and apoſtles, when we meet with a difficult text! But that glorious converſation is reſerved for the ages of future bleſſedneſs.

2. When we are diſcourſing upon any theme with a friend, we may propoſe our doubts and objections againſt his ſentiments, and have them ſolved and anſwered at once.—The difficulties that ariſe in our minds may be removed by one enlightening word of our correſpondent; whereas in reading, if a difficulty or queſtion ariſe in our thoughts which the author has not happened to mention, we muſt be content without a preſent anſwer or ſolution of it. Books cannot ſpeak.

3. Not only the doubts which ariſe in the mind upon any ſubject of diſcourſe are eaſily propoſed and ſolved in converſation, but the very difficulties we meet with in books and in our private ſtudies, may find a relief by friendly conference. We may pore upon a knotty point in ſolitary meditation

many months without a ſolution, becauſe perhaps we have gotten into a wrong tract of thought; and our labour, while we are purſuing a falſe ſcent, is not only uſeleſs and unſucceſsful, but it leads us perhaps into a long train of errour for want of being corrected in the firſt ſtep. But if we note down this difficulty when we read it, we may propoſe it to an ingenious correſpondent when we ſee him; we may be relieved in a moment, and find the difficulty vaniſh; he beholds the object perhaps in a different view, ſets it before us in quite another light, leads us at once into evidence and truth, and that with a delightful ſurpriſe.

4. Converſation calls out into light what has been lodged in all the receſſes and ſecret chambers of the ſoul; by occaſional hints and incidents it brings old uſeful notions into remembrance, it unfolds and diſplays the hidden treaſures of knowledge with which reading, obſervation, and ſtudy had before furniſhed the mind. By mutual diſcourſe the ſoul is awakened and allured to bring forth its hoards of knowledge, and it learns how to render them moſt uſeful to mankind. A man of vaſt reading without converſation, is like a miſer who lives only to himſelf.

5. In free and friendly converſation our intellectual powers are more animated, and our ſpirits act with a ſuperiour vigour in the queſt and purſuit of unknown truths. There is a ſharpneſs and ſagacity of thought that attends converſation, beyond what we find whilſt we are ſhut up reading and muſing in our retirements. Our ſouls may be ſerene in ſolitude, but not ſparkling, though perhaps we are employed in reading the works of the brighteſt writers. Often has it happened in free diſcourſe, that new thoughts are ſtrangely ſtruck out, and the ſeeds of truth ſparkle and blaze through the company, which in calm and ſilent reading would never have been excited. By converſation you will both give and receive this benefit; as flints when put into motion and ſtriking againſt each other produce living fire on both ſides, which would never have riſen from the ſame hard materials in a ſtate of reſt.

6. In generous converſation, amongſt ingenious and learned men, we have a great advantage of propoſing our private opinions, and of bringing our own ſentiments to the teſt, and learning in a more compendious and a ſafer way what the world will judge of them, how mankind will receive them,

what objections may be raiſed againſt them, what defects there are in our ſcheme, and how to correct our own miſtakes; which advantages are not ſo eaſy to be obtained by our own private meditations; for the pleaſure we take in our own notions, and the paſſion of ſelf love, as well as the narrowneſs of our views, tempt us to paſs too favourable an opinion on our own ſchemes; whereas the variety of genius in our ſeveral aſſociates, will give happy notices how our opinions will ſtand in the view of mankind.

7. It is alſo another conſiderable advantage of converſation, that it furniſhes the ſtudent with the knowledge of men and the affairs of life, as reading furniſhes him with book learning. A man who dwells all his days among books may have amaſſed together a vaſt heap of notions, but he may be a mere ſcholar, which is a contemptible ſort of character in the world. A hermit who has been ſhut up in his cell in a college, has contracted a ſort of mould and ruſt upon his ſoul, and all his airs of behaviour have a certain awkwardneſs in them; but theſe awkward airs are worn away by degrees in company; the ruſt and the mould are filed and bruſhed off by polite converſation. The ſcholar now becomes a citizen or a gentleman, a neighbour and a friend; he learns how to dreſs his ſentiments in the faireſt colours, as well as to ſet them in the ſtrongeſt light. Thus he brings out his notions with honour, he makes ſome uſe of them in the world, and improves the theory by the practice.

But before we proceed too far in finiſhing a bright character by converſation, we ſhould conſider that ſomething elſe is neceſſary beſides an acquaintance with men and books; and therefore I add:

V. MERE lectures, reading, and converſation, without thinking, are not ſufficient to make a man of knowledge and wiſdom. It is our thought and reflection, ſtudy and meditation, muſt attend all the other methods of improvement, and perfect them. It carries theſe advantages with it:

1. Though obſervation and inſtruction, reading and converſation, may furniſh us with many ideas of men and things, yet it is our own meditation and the labour of our own thoughts that muſt form our judgment of things. Our own thoughts ſhould join or diſjoin theſe ideas in a propoſition for ourſelves: It is our own mind that muſt judge for ourſelves concerning

the agreement or diſagreement of ideas, and form propoſitions out of them. Reading and converſation may acquaint us with many truths and with many arguments to ſupport them; but it is our own ſtudy and reaſoning that muſt determine whether theſe propoſitions are true, and whether theſe arguments are juſt and ſolid.

It is confeſſed there are a thouſand things which our eyes have not ſeen, and which would never come within the reach of our perſonal and immediate knowledge and obſervation, becauſe of the times and places: Theſe muſt be known by conſulting other perſons; and that is done either in their writings or in their diſcourſes. But, after all, let this be a fixed point with us, that it is our own reflection and judgment muſt determine how far we ſhould receive that, of which books and men inform us, and how far they are worthy of our aſſent and credit.

2. It is meditation and ſtudy that transfers and conveys the notions and ſentiments of others to ourſelves, ſo as to make them properly our own. It is our own judgment upon them, as well as our memory of them, that makes them become our own property. It does, as it were, concoct our intellectual food, and turns it into a part of ourſelves; juſt as a man may call his limbs and his fleſh his own, whether he borrowed the materials from the ox or the ſheep, from the lark or the lobſter; whether he derived it from corn or milk, the fruits of the trees, or the herbs and roots of the earth; it is all now become one ſubſtance with himſelf, and he wields and manages thoſe muſcles and limbs for his own proper purpoſes, which once were the ſubſtance of other animals or vegetables; that very ſubſtance which, laſt week, was grazing in the field or ſwimming in the ſea, waving in the milk pail or growing in the garden, is now become part of the man.

3. By ſtudy and meditation we improve the hints that we have acquired by obſervation, converſation, and reading; we take more time in thinking, and, by the labour of the mind, we penetrate deeper into the themes of knowledge, and carry our thoughts ſometimes much farther on many ſubjects, than we ever met with either in the books of the dead or the diſcourſes of the living. It is our own reaſoning that draws out one truth from another, and forms a whole ſcheme of ſcience from a few hints which are borrowed elſewhere.

By a ſurvey of theſe things we may juſtly conclude, that he who ſpends all his time in hearing lectures, or poring upon books, without obſervation, meditation, or converſe, will have but a mere hiſtorical knowledge of learning, and be able to tell only what others have ſaid or known on the ſubject. He that lets all his time flow away in converſation, without due obſervation, reading, or ſtudy, will gain but a ſlight and ſuperficial knowledge, which will be in danger of vaniſhing with the voice of the ſpeaker: And he that confines himſelf merely to his cloſet and his own narrow obſervation of things, and is taught only by his own ſolitary thoughts, without inſtruction by lectures, reading, or free converſation, will be in danger of a narrow ſpirit, a vain conceit of himſelf, and an unreaſonable contempt of others; and, after all, he will obtain but a very limited and imperfect view and knowledge of things, and he will ſeldom learn how to make that knowledge uſeful.

Theſe five methods of improvement ſhould be purſued jointly, and go hand in hand, where our circumſtances are ſo happy as to find opportunity and conveniency to enjoy them all. Though I muſt give my opinion, that two of them, viz. reading and meditation, ſhould employ much more of our time than public lectures, or converſation and diſcourſe. As for obſervation we may be always acquiring knowledge that way, whether we are alone or in company.

But it will be for our further improvement, if we go over all theſe five methods of obtaining knowledge more diſtinctly, and more at large, and ſee what ſpecial advances in uſeful ſcience we may draw from them.

CHAP. III.

Rules relating to Obſervation.

THOUGH obſervation, in the ſtrict ſenſe of the word, and as it is diſtinguiſhed from meditation and ſtudy, is the firſt mean of improvement, and in its ſtricteſt ſenſe does not include in it any reaſonings of the mind on the things we obſerve, or inferences drawn from them; yet the motions of the mind are ſo exceeding ſwift, that it is hardly poſſible for a thinking man to gain experiences or obſervations, without making ſome ſecret and ſhort reflections on them; and therefore, in giving a few directions concerning this method of improvement, I ſhall not ſo narrowly confine myſelf to the firſt mere impreſſion of objects on the mind by obſervation; but include alſo ſome hints which relate to the firſt, moſt eaſy, and obvious reflections or reaſonings which ariſe from them.

I. Let the enlargement of your knowledge be one conſtant view and deſign of your life; ſince there is no time or place, no tranſactions, occurrences, or engagements in life, which exclude us from this method of improving the mind. When we are alone, even in darkneſs and ſilence, we may converſe with our own hearts, obſerve the workings of our ſpirits, and reflect on the inward motions of our paſſions in ſome of the lateſt occurrences in life; we may acquaint ourſelves with the powers and properties, the tendencies and inclinations both of body and ſpirit, and gain a more intimate knowledge of ourſelves. When we are in company, we may diſcover ſomething more of human nature, of human paſſions and follies, and of human affairs, vices, and virtues, by converſing with mankind, and obſerving their conduct. Nor is there any thing more valuable than the kowledge of ourſelves, and the knowledge of men, excepting it be the knowledge of God who made us, and of our relation to him as our Governor.

When we are in the houſe or the city, wherever we turn our eyes, we ſee the works of men; when we are abroad in the country, we behold more of the works of God. The ſkies and the ground above and beneath us, and the animal and vegetable world round about us, may entertain our obſervation with ten thouſand varieties.

Endeavour therefore to derive ſome inſtruction or improvement of the mind from every thing which you ſee or hear, from every thing which occurs in human life, from every thing within you or without you.

Fetch down ſome knowledge from the ſkies, the ſtars, the ſun, the moon, and the revolutions of all the planets. Dig and draw up ſome valuable meditations from the depths of the earth, and ſearch them through the vaſt oceans of water. Extract ſome intellectual improvements from the minerals and metals; from the wonders of nature among the vegetables,

and

"God made the country, but man made the town."
Cowper

and herbs, trees, and flowers. Learn ſome leſſons from the birds, from the beaſts, and from the loweſt inſect. Read the wiſdom of God and his admirable contrivance in them all. Read his almighty power, his rich and various goodneſs, in all the works of his hands.

From the day and night, from the hours and flying minutes, learn a wiſe improvement of time; and be watchful to ſeize every opportunity to increaſe in knowledge.

From the viciſſitudes and revolutions of nations and families, and from the various occurrences of the world, learn the inſtability of mortal affairs, the uncertainty of life, the certainty of death. From a coffin and a funeral, learn to meditate on your own departure.

From the vices and follies of others, obſerve what is hateful in them; conſider how ſuch a practice looks in another perſon, and remember that it looks as ill or worſe in yourſelf. From the virtues of others, learn ſomething worthy of imitation.

From the deformity, the diſtreſs, or calamity of others, derive leſſons of thankfulneſs to God, and hymns of grateful praiſe to your Creator, Governor, and Benefactor; who has formed you in a better mould, and guarded you from thoſe evils. Learn alſo the ſacred leſſon of contentment in your own eſtate, and compaſſion to your neighbour under his miſeries.

From your natural powers, ſenſations, judgment, memory, hands, feet, &c. make this inference, that they were not given you for nothing, but for ſome uſeful employment to the honour of your Maker, and for the good of your fellow creatures, as well as for your own beſt intereſt and final happineſs.

From the ſorrows, the pains, the ſickneſſes, and ſufferings that attend you, learn the evil of ſin, and the imperfection of your preſent ſtate. From your own ſins and follies learn the patience of God toward you, and the practice of humility toward God and man.

Thus from every appearance in nature, and from every occurrence of life, you may derive natural, moral, and religious obſervations to entertain your minds, as well as rules of conduct in the affairs relating to this life, and that which is to come.

II. In order to furniſh the mind with a rich variety of ideas, the laudable curioſity of young people ſhould be indulged and gratified rather than diſcouraged. It is a very hopeful ſign in young perſons, to ſee them curious in obſerving, and inquiſitive in ſearching into the greateſt part of things that occur; nor ſhould ſuch an inquiring temper be frowned into ſilence, nor be rigorouſly reſtrained, but ſhould rather be ſatisfied by proper anſwers given to all thoſe queries.

For this reaſon alſo, where time and fortune allow it, young people ſhould be led into company at proper ſeaſons, ſhould be carried abroad to ſee the fields, and the woods, and the rivers, the buildings, towns, and cities diſtant from their own dwelling; they ſhould be entertained with the ſight of ſtrange birds, beaſts, fiſhes, inſects; vegetables, and productions both of nature and art of every kind, whether they are the products of their own or foreign nations; and in due time, where Providence gives opportunity, they may travel under a wiſe inſpector or tutor to different parts of the world for the ſame end, that they may bring home treaſures of uſeful knowledge.

III. Among all theſe obſervations, write down what is more remarkable and uncommon; reſerve theſe remarks in ſtore for proper occaſions, and at proper ſeaſons take a review of them. Such a practice will ſecure the workings of your ſoul from running to waſte, and by this mean even your looſer moments will turn to happy account both here and hereafter.

And whatever uſeful obſervations have been made, let them be at leaſt ſome part of the ſubject of your converſation among your friends at next meeting.

Let the circumſtances or ſituations of life be what or where they will, a man ſhould never neglect this improvement which may be derived from obſervation. Let him travel into the Eaſt or Weſt Indies, and fulfil the duties of the military or the mercantile life there; let him rove through the earth or the ſeas for his own humour as a traveller, or purſue his diverſions in what part of the world he pleaſes as a gentleman; let proſperous or adverſe fortune call him into the moſt diſtant parts of the globe; ſtill let him carry on his knowledge and the improvement of his ſoul by wiſe obſervations. In due time, by this means he may render himſelf ſome way uſeful to the ſocieties of mankind.

THEOBALDINO, in his younger years, viſited the foreſts of Norway on the account of trade and timber, and beſides his proper obſervations of the growth of trees on thoſe northern mountains, he learnt there was a ſort of people called *Finns*, in thoſe confines which border upon Sweden, whoſe habitation is in the woods; and he lived afterwards to give a good account of them, and ſome of their cuſtoms, to the Royal Society for the improvement of natural knowledge. PUTEOLI was taken captive into Turkey in his youth, and travelled with his maſter in their holy pilgrimage to Mecca, whereby he became more intelligent in the forms, ceremonies, and fooleries of the Mahometan worſhip, than perhaps any Briton knew before; and by his munuſcripts we are more acquainted in this laſt century with the Turkiſh ſacreds than any one had ever informed us.

IV. LET us keep our minds as free as poſſible from paſſions and prejudices, for theſe will give a wrong turn to our obſervations both on perſons and things. The eyes of a man in the jaundice make yellow obſervations on every thing; and the foul tinctured with any paſſion or prejudice diffuſes a falſe colour over the real appearances of things, and diſguiſes many of the common occurrences of life; it never beholds things in a true light, nor ſuffers them to appear as they are. Whenſoever therefore you would make proper obſervations, let ſelf, with all its influences, ſtand aſide as far as poſſible; abſtract your own intereſt and your own concern from them, and bid all friendſhips and enmities ſtand aloof and keep out of the way, in the obſervatioos that you make relating to perſons and things.

If this rule were well obeyed, we ſhould be much better guarded againſt thoſe common pieces of miſconduct in the obſervations of men, viz. the falſe judgments of pride and envy. How ready is envy to mingle with the notices which we take of other perſons! How often is mankind prone to put an ill ſenſe upon the actions of their neighbours, to take a ſurvey of them in an evil poſition, and in an unhappy light! And by this mean we form a worſe opinion of our neighbours than they deſerve; while at the ſame time pride and ſelf flattery tempt us to make unjuſt obſervations on ourſelves, in our own favour. In all the favourable judgments we paſs concerning ourſelves, we ſhould allow a little abatement on this

V. In making your obſervations on perſons, take care of indulging that buſy curioſity which is ever inquiring into private and domeſtic affairs, with an endleſs itch of learning the ſecret hiſtory of families. It is but ſeldom that ſuch a prying curioſity attains any valuable ends; it often begets ſuſpicions, jealouſies, and diſturbances in houſeholds, and it is a frequent temptation to perſons to defame their neighbours. Some perſons cannot help telling what they know; a buſy body is moſt liable to become a tatler upon every occaſion.

VI. Let your obſervations even of perſons and their conduct, be chiefly deſigned in order to lead you to a better acquaintance with things, particularly with human nature; and to inform you what to imitate and what to avoid, rather than to furniſh out matter for the evil paſſions of the mind, or the impertinencies of diſcourſe, and reproaches of the tongue.

VII. Though it may be proper ſometimes to make your obſervations concerning perſons as well as things, the ſubject of your diſcourſe in learned or uſeful converſation; yet what remarks you make on particular perſons, eſpecially to their diſadvantage, ſhould for the moſt part lie hid in your own breaſt, till ſome juſt and apparent occaſion, ſome neceſſary call of Providence leads you to ſpeak to them.

If the character or conduct which you obſerve be greatly culpable, it ſhould ſo much the leſs be publiſhed. You may treaſure up ſuch remarks of the follies, indecencies, or vices of your neighbours, as may be a conſtant guard againſt your practice of the ſame, without expoſing the reputation of your neighbour on that account. It is a good old rule, that our converſation ſhould rather be laid out on things than on perſons; and this rule ſhould generally be obſerved, unleſs names be concealed, whereſoever the faults or follies of mankind are our preſent theme.

Our late archbiſhop Tillotson has written a ſmall but excellent diſcourſe on evil ſpeaking, wherein he admirably explains, limits, and applies that general apoſtolic precept, 'Speak evil of no man,' Tit. iii. 2.

VIII. Be not too haſty to erect general theories from a few particular obſervations, appearances, or experiments. This is what the logicians call a falſe induction. When general obſervations are drawn from ſo many particulars as to become certain and indubitable, theſe are jewels of knowledge, comprehending great treaſure in a little room; but they are therefore to be made with the greater care and caution, leſt errours become large and diffuſive, if we ſhould miſtake in theſe general notions.

A haſty determination of ſome univerſal principles, without a due ſurvey of all the particular caſes which may be included in them, is the way to lay a trap for our own underſtandings in their purſuit of any ſubject, and we ſhall often be taken captives into miſtake and falſehood. NIVEO in his youth obſerved, that on three Chriſtmas days together there fell a good quantity of ſnow, and now he hath written it down in his almanack as part of his wiſe remarks on the weather, that it will always ſnow at Chriſtmas. EURON, a young lad, took notice ten times that there was a ſharp froſt when the wind was in the north eaſt, therefore in the middle of laſt July he almoſt expected it ſhould freeze, becauſe the weather cocks ſhewed him a north eaſt wind; and he was ſtill more diſappointed when he found it a very ſultry ſeaſon. It is the ſame haſty judgment that hath thrown ſcandal on a whole nation for the ſake of ſome culpable characters belonging to ſeveral particular natives of that country; whereas all the Frenchmen are not gay and airy; all the Italians are not jealous and revengeful; nor are all the Engliſh over run with the ſpleen.

CHAP. IV.

Of Books and Reading.

I.

THE world is full of books, but there are multitudes which are ſo ill written they were never worth any man's reading; and there are thouſands more which may be good in their kind, yet are worth nothing when the month, or year, or occaſion is paſt for which they were written. Others may be valuable in themſelves, for ſome ſpecial purpoſe or in ſome peculiar ſcience, but are not fit to be peruſed by any but thoſe who are engaged in that particular ſcience or buſineſs. To what uſe is it for a divine or phyſician, or a tradeſman, to read over the huge volumes of reports of judged caſes in the law? or for a lawyer to learn Hebrew and read the Rabbins? It is of vaſt advantage for improvement of knowledge and ſaving time, for a young man to have the moſt proper books for his reading recommended by a judicious friend.

II. BOOKS of importance of any kind, and eſpecially complete treatiſes on any ſubject, ſhould be firſt read in a more general and curſory manner, to learn a little what the treatiſe promiſes, and what you may expect from the writer's manner and ſkill. And for this end I would adviſe always that the preface be read, and a ſurvey taken of the table of contents, if there be one, before the firſt ſurvey of the book. By this means you will not only be better fitted to give the book the firſt reading, but you will be much aſſiſted in your ſecond peruſal of it, which ſhould be done with greater attention and deliberation, and you will learn with more eaſe and readineſs what the author pretends to teach. In your reading, mark what is new or unknown to you before, and review thoſe chapters, pages, or paragraphs. Unleſs a reader has an uncommon and moſt retentive memory, I may venture to affirm, that there is ſcarce any book or chapter worth reading once that is not worthy of a ſecond peruſal. At leaſt take a careful review of all the lines or paragraphs which you marked, and make a recollection of the ſections which you thought truly valuable.

There is another reaſon alſo why I would chuſe to take a ſuperficial and curſory ſurvey of a book, before I ſit down to read it, and dwell upon it with ſtudious attention; and that is, there may be ſeveral difficulties in it which we cannot eaſily underſtand and conquer at the firſt reading, for want of a fuller comprehenſion of the author's whole ſcheme. And therefore in ſuch treatiſes we ſhould not ſtay till we maſter every difficulty at the firſt peruſal; for perhaps many of theſe would appear to be ſolved when we have proceeded farther in that book, or would vaniſh of themſelves upon a ſecond reading.

What we cannot reach and penetrate at firſt, may be noted down as matter of after conſideration and inquiry, if the pages that follow do not happen to ſtrike a complete light on thoſe which went before.

III. If three or four perſons agree to read the ſame book, and each bring his own remarks upon it at ſome ſet hours appointed for converſation, and they communicate mutually their ſentiments on the ſubject, and debate about it in a friendly manner, this practice will render the reading any other author abundantly more beneficial to every one of them.

IV. If ſeveral perſons engaged in the ſame ſtudy take into their hands diſtinct treatiſes on one ſubject, and appoint a ſeaſon of communication once a week, they may inform each other in a brief manner concerning the ſenſe, ſentiments, and method of thoſe ſeveral authors, and thereby promote each other's improvement, either by recommending the peruſal of the ſame book to their companions, or perhaps by ſatisfying their inquiries concerning it by converſation, without every one's peruſing it.

V. Remember that your buſineſs in reading or in converſation, eſpecially on ſubjects of natural, moral, or divine ſcience, is not merely to know the opinion of the author or ſpeaker, for this is but the mere knowledge of hiſtory; but your chief buſineſs is to conſider whether their opinions are right or not, and to improve your own ſolid knowledge of that ſubject by meditation on the themes of their writing or diſcourſe. Deal freely with every author you read, and yield up your aſſent only to evidence and juſt reaſoning on the ſubject.

Here I would be underſtood to ſpeak only of human authors, and not of the ſacred and inſpired writings. In theſe our buſineſs indeed is only to find out the ſenſe, and underſtand the true meaning of the paragraph and page, and our aſſent then is bound to follow when we are before ſatisfied that the writing is divine. Yet I might add alſo, that even this is juſt reaſoning, and this is ſufficient evidence to demand our aſſent,

But in the compoſures of men, remember you are a man as well as they; and it is not their reaſon but your own that is given to guide you when you arrive at years of diſcretion, of manly age and judgment.

VI. Let this thererore be your practice, eſpecially after you have gone through one courſe of any ſcience in your academical ſtudies; if a writer on that ſubject maintains the ſame ſentiments as you do, yet if he does not explain his ideas or prove his poſitions well, mark the faults or defects, and endeavour to do it better, either in the margin of your book, or rather in ſome papers of your own, or at leaſt let it be done in your private meditations. As for inſtance:

Where the author is obſcure, enlighten him; where he is imperfect, ſupply his deficiences; where he is too brief and conciſe, amplify a little, and ſet his notions in a fairer view; where he is redundant, mark thoſe paragraphs to be retrenched; when he trifles and grows impertinent, abandon thoſe paſſages or pages; where he argues, obſerve whether his reaſons be concluſive; if the concluſion be true, and yet the argument weak, endeavour to confirm it by better proofs; where he derives or infers any propoſitions darkly or doubtfully, make the juſtice of the inference appear, and add further inferences or corollaries, if ſuch occur to your mind; where you ſuppoſe he is in a miſtake, propoſe your objection and correct his ſentiments; what he writes ſo well as to approve itſelf to your judgment, both as juſt and uſeful, treaſure it up in your memory, and count it a part of your intellectual gains.

Note, Many of theſe ſame directions which I have now given, may be practiſed with regard to converſation, as well as reading, in order to render it uſeful in the moſt extenſive and laſting manner.

VII. OTHER things alſo of the like nature may be uſefully practiſed with regard to authors which you read, viz. If the method of a book be irregular, reduce it into form by a little analyſis of your own, or by hints in the margin; if thoſe things are heaped together which ſhould be ſeperated, you may wiſely diſtinguiſh and divide them. If ſeveral things relating to the ſame ſubject are ſcattered up and down ſeperately through the treatiſe, you may bring them all to one view by references; or if the matter of a book be really valuable and deſerving, you may throw it into a better method, reduce it to a more logical ſcheme, or abridge it into a leſſer form; all theſe practices will have a tendency both to advance your ſkill in logic and method, to improve your judgment in general, and to give you a fuller ſurvey of that ſubject in particular. When you have finiſhed the treatiſe with all your obſervations upon on it, recollect and determine what real improvements you have made by reading that author.

VIII. If a book has no index to it, or good table of contents, it is very uſeful to make one as you are reading it; not with that exactneſs as to include the ſenſe of every page and paragraph, which ſhould be done if you deſigned to print it; but it is ſufficient in your index to take notice only of thoſe parts of the book which are new to you, or which you think well written, and well worthy of your remembrance or review.

Shall I be ſo free as to aſſure my younger friends, from my own experience, that theſe methods of reading will coſt ſome pains in the firſt years of your ſtudy, and eſpecially in the firſt authors which you peruſe in any ſcience, or on any particular ſubject; but the profit will richly compenſate the pains. And in the following years of life, after you have read a few valuable books on any ſpecial ſubject in this manner, it will be very eaſy to read others of the ſame kind, becauſe you will not uſually find very much new matter in them which you have not already examined.

IX. If the writer be remarkable for any peculiar excellencies or defects in his ſtyle or manner of writing, make juſt obſervations upon this alſo; and whatever ornaments you find there, or whatſoever blemiſhes occur in the language or manner of the writers, you may make juſt remarks upon them. And remember, that one book read over in this manner, with all this labourious meditation, will tend more to enrich your underſtanding than the ſkimming over the ſurface of twenty authors.

X. By peruſing books in the manner I have deſcribed, you will make all your reading ſubſervient not only to the enlargement of your treaſures of knowledge, but alſo to the improvement of your reaſoning powers.

There are many who read with conſtancy and diligence, and yet make no advances in true knowledge by it. They are delighted with the notions which they read or hear, as they would be with ſtories that are told, but they do not weigh them in their minds as in a juſt balance, in order to determine their truth or falſehood; they make no obſervations upon them, or inferences from them. Perhaps their eye ſlides over the pages, or the words ſlide over their ears, and vaniſh like a rhapſody of evening tales, or the ſhadows of a cloud flying over a green field in a ſummer's day.

Or if they review them ſufficiently to fix them in their remembrance, it is merely with a deſign to tell the tale over again, and ſhew what men of learning they are. Thus they dream out their days in a courſe of reading without real advantage. As a man may be eating all day, and for want of digeſtion is never nouriſhed; ſo theſe endleſs readers may cram themſelves in vain with intellectual food, and without real improvement of their minds, for want of digeſting it by proper reflections.

XI. Be diligent therefore in obſerving theſe directions. Enter into the ſenſe and argument of the authors you read, examine all their proofs, and then judge of the truth or falſehood of their opinions; and thereby you ſhall not only gain a rich increaſe of your underſtandings by thoſe truths which the author teaches, when you ſee them well ſupported, but you ſhall acquire alſo by degrees an habit of judging juſtly, and of reaſoning well, in imitation of the good writer, whoſe works you peruſe.

This is laborious indeed, and the mind is backward to undergo the fatigue of weighing every argument and tracing every thing to its original. It is much leſs labour to take all things upon truſt; believing is much eaſier than arguing. But when Studentio had once perſuaded his mind to tie itſelf down to this method which I have preſcribed, he ſenſibly gained an admirable facility to read, and judge of what he read, by his daily practice of it, and the man made large advances in the purſuit of truth; while Plumbinus and Plumeo made leſs progreſs in knowledge, though they had read over more folios. Plumeo ſkimmed over the pages like a ſwallow over the flowery meads in May. Plumbinus read every line and ſyllable, but did not give himſelf the trouble of thinking and judging about them. They both could boaſt in company of their great reading, for they knew more titles and pages than Studentio, but were far leſs acquainted with ſcience.

I confeſs thoſe whoſe reading is deſigned only to fit them for much talk, and little knowledge, may content themſelves to run over their authors in ſuch a ſudden and trifling way; they may devour libraries in this manner, yet be poor reaſoners at laſt, and have no ſolid wiſdom or true learning. The traveller who walks on fair and ſoftly, in a courſe that points right, and examines every turning before he ventures upon it, will come ſooner and ſafer to his journey's end, than he who runs through every lane he meets, though he gallop full ſpeed all the day. The man of much reading and a large retentive memory, but without meditation, may become, in the ſenſe of the world, a knowing man; and if he converſes much with the ancients, he may attain the fame of learning too; but he ſpends his days afar off from wiſdom and true judgment, and poſſeſſes very little ſubſtantial riches of the mind.

XII. NEVER apply yourſelves to read any human author with determination, before hand, either for or againſt him, or with a ſettled reſolution to believe or diſbelieve, to confirm or to oppoſe whatſoever he ſaith; but always read with a deſign to lay your mind open to truth, and to embrace it whereſoever you find it, as well as to reject every falſehood, though it appear under ever ſo fair a diſguiſe. How unhappy are thoſe men who ſeldom take an author into their hands, but they have determined before they begin, whether they will like or diſlike him! They have got ſome notion of his name, his character, his party, or his principles, by general converſation, or perhaps by ſome ſlight view of a few pages; and having all their own opinions adjuſted before hand, they read all that he writes with a prepoſſeſſion either for or againſt him. Unhappy thoſe who hunt and purvey for a party, and ſcrape together out of every author, all thoſe things, and thoſe only, which favour their own tenets, while they diſpiſe and neglect all the reſt!

XIII. YET take this caution. I would not be underſtood here, as though I perſuaded a perſon to live without any ſettled principles at all, by which to judge of men, and books, and things; or that I would keep a man always doubting about his foundations. The chief things that I deſign in this advice, are theſe three.

1. That after our moſt neceſſary and important principles of ſcience, prudence, and religion, are ſettled upon good grounds, with regard to our preſent conduct and our future hopes, we ſhould read with a juſt freedom of thought, all thoſe books which treat of ſuch ſubjects as may admit of doubt and reaſonable diſpute. Nor ſhould any of our opinions be ſo reſolved upon, eſpecially in younger years, as never to hear or to bear an oppoſition to them.

2. When we peruſe thoſe authors who defend our own ſettled ſentiments, we ſhould not take all their arguings for

juſt and ſolid; but we ſhould make a wiſe diſtinction betwixt the corn and the chaff, between ſolid reaſoning and the mere ſuperficial colours of it; nor ſhould we readily ſwallow down all their leſſer opinions becauſe we agree with them in the greater.

3. That when we read thoſe authors which oppoſe our moſt certain and eſtabliſhed principles, we ſhould be ready to receive any informations from them in other points, and not abandon at once every thing they ſay, though we are well fixed in oppoſition to their main point of arguing.

——*Fas eſt, et ab hoſte doceri.* VIRG.

Seize upon truth where e'er tis found,
Amongſt your friends, amongſt your foes,
On Chriſtian or on Heathen ground;
The flower's divine where e'er it grows;
Neglect the prickles, and aſſume the roſe.

XIV. WHAT I have ſaid hitherto on this ſubject, relating to books and reading, muſt be chiefly underſtood of that ſort of books, and thoſe hours of our reading and ſtudy, whereby we deſign to improve the intellectual powers of the mind with natural, moral or divine knowledge. As for thoſe treatiſes which are written to direct or to enforce and perſuade our practice, there is one thing further neceſſary; and that is, that when our conſciences are convinced that theſe rules of prudence or duty belong to us, and require our conformity to them, we ſhould then call ourſelves to account, and inquire ſeriouſly whether we have put them in practice or not; we ſhould dwell upon the arguments, and impreſs the motives and methods of perſuaſion upon our own hearts, till we feel the force and power of them inclining us to the practice of the things which are there recommended.

If folly or vice be repreſented in its open colours, or its ſecret diſguiſes, let us ſearch our hearts, and review our lives, and inquire how far we are criminal; nor ſhould we ever think we have done with the treatiſe till we feel ourſelves in ſorrow for our paſt miſconduct, and aſpiring after a victory over thoſe vices, or till we find a cure of thoſe follies begun to be wrought upon our ſouls.

In all our ſtudies and purſuits of knowledge, let us remember that virtue and vice, ſin and holineſs, and the conformation of our hearts and lives to the duties of true religion and morality, are things of far more conſeqence than all the furniture of our underſtandings, and the richeſt treaſures of mere ſpeculative knowledge; and that becauſe they have a more immediate and effectual influence upon our eternal felicity or eternal ſorrow.

XV. THERE is yet another ſort of books, of which it is proper I ſhould ſay ſomething while I am treating on this ſubject; and theſe are hiſtory, poeſy, travels, books of diverſion or amuſement; among which we may reckon alſo, little common pamphlets, news papers, or ſuch like; for many of theſe I confeſs once reading may be ſufficient, where there is a tolerable good memory.

Or when ſeveral perſons are in company, and one reads to the reſt ſuch ſort of writings, once hearing may be ſufficient, provided that every one be ſo attentive, and ſo free as to make their occaſional remarks on ſuch lines or ſentences, ſuch periods or paragraphs, as in their opinion deſerve it. Now all thoſe paragraphs or ſentiments deſerve a remark, which are new and uncommon, are noble and excellent for the matter of them, are ſtrong and convincing for the argument contained in them, are beautiful and elegant for the language or the manner, or any way worthy of a ſecond rehearſal; and at the requeſt of any of the company let thoſe paragraphs be read over again.

Such parts alſo of theſe writings as may happen to be remarkably ſtupid or ſilly, falſe or miſtaken, ſhould become ſubjects of an occaſional criticiſm, made by ſome of the company; and this may give occaſion to the repetition of them for confirmation of the cenſure, for amuſement or diverſion.

Still let it be remembered, that where the hiſtorical narration is of conſiderable moment, where the poeſy, oratory, &c. ſhine with ſome degrees of perfection and glory, a ſingle reading is neither ſufficient to ſatisfy a mind that has a true taſte of this ſort of writing; nor can we make the fulleſt and beſt improvement of them without proper reviews, and that in our retirement as well as in company. Who is there that has any taſte for polite writings that would be ſufficiently ſatisfied with hearing the beautiful pages of STEELE or ADDISON, the admirable deſcriptions of VIRGIL or MILTON, or ſome of the fineſt poems of POPE, YOUNG, or DRYDEN, once read over to them, and then lay them by for ever?

XVI. Among theſe writings of the latter kind we may juſtly reckon ſhort miſcellaneous eſſays on all manner of ſubjects; ſuch as the Occaſional Papers, the Tatlers, the Spectators, and ſome other books that have been compiled out of the weekly or daily products of the preſs, wherein are contained a great number of bright thoughts, ingenious remarks, and admirable obſervations, which have had a conſiderable ſhare in furniſhing the preſent age with knowledge and politeneſs.

I wiſh every paper among theſe writings could have been recommended both as innocent and uſeful. I wiſh every unſeemly idea and wanton expreſſion had been baniſhed from amongſt them, and every trifling page had been excluded from the company of the reſt when they had been bound up in volumes. But it is not to be expected, in ſo imperfect a ſtate, that every page or piece of ſuch mixed public papers ſhould be entirely blameleſs and laudable. Yet in the main it muſt be confeſſed, there is ſo much virtue, prudence, ingenuity, and goodneſs in them, eſpecially in eight volumes of Spectators, there is ſuch a reverence of things ſacred, ſo many valuable remarks for our conduct in life, that they are not improper to lie in parlours, or ſummer houſes, or places of uſual reſidence, to entertain our thoughts in any moments of leiſure, or vacant hours that occur. There is ſuch a diſcovery of the follies, iniquities, and faſhionable vices of mankind contained in them, that we may learn much of the humours and madneſſes of the age and the public world, in our own ſolitary retirement, without the danger of frequenting vicious company, or receiving the mortal infection.

XVII. Among other books which are proper and requiſite, in order to improve our knowledge in general, or our acquaintance with any particular ſcience, it is neceſſary that we ſhould be furniſhed with vocabularies and dictionaries of ſeveral ſorts, viz. Of common words, idioms, and phraſes, in order to explain their ſenſe; of technical words or the terms of art, to ſhew their uſe in arts and ſciences; of names of men, countries, towns, rivers, &c. which are called hiſtorical and geographical dictionaries, &c. Theſe are to be conſulted and uſed upon every occaſion; and never let an unknown word paſs in your reading, without ſeeking for its ſenſe and meaning in ſome of theſe writers.

If ſuch books are not at hand, you muſt ſupply the want of them, as well as you can, by conſulting ſuch as can inform you; and it is uſeful to note down the matters of doubt and inquiry in ſome pocket book, and take the firſt opportunity to get them reſolved, either by perſons or books, when we meet with them.

XVIII. Be not ſatisfied with a mere knowledge of the beſt authors that treat of any ſubject, inſtead of acquainting yourſelves thoroughly with the ſubject itſelf. There is many a young ſtudent that is fond of enlarging his knowledge of books, and he contents himſelf with the notice he has of their title-page, which is the attainment of a book ſeller rather than a ſcholar. Such perſons are under a great temptation to practiſe theſe two follies. 1. To heap up a great number of books at greater expence than moſt of them can bear, and to furniſh their libraries infinitely better than their underſtandings. And 2. When they have got ſuch rich treaſures of knowledge upon their ſhelves, they imagine themſelves men of learning, and take a pride in talking of the names of famous authors and the ſubjects of which they treat, without any real improvement of their own minds in true ſcience or wiſdom. At beſt their learning reaches no farther than the indexes and tables of contents, while they know not how to judge or reaſon concerning the matters contained in thoſe authors.

And indeed how many volumes of learning ſoever a man poſſeſſes, he is ſtill deplorably poor in his underſtanding, till he has made theſe ſeveral parts of learning his own property, by reading and reaſoning, by judging for himſelf and remembering what he has read.

CHAP. V.

Judgement of Books.

I.

IF we would form a judgement of a book which we have not ſeen before, the firſt thing that offers is the title page, and we may ſometimes gueſs a little at the import and deſign of a book thereby; though it muſt be confeſt, that titles are often deceitful, and promiſe more than the book performs.

The author's name, if it be known in the world, may help us to conjecture at the performance a little more, and lead us to gueſs in what manner it is done. A peruſal of the preface or introduction, which I before recommended, may further aſſiſt our judgment; and, if there be an index of the contents, it will give us ſtill ſome advancing light.

If we have not leiſure or inclination to read over the book itſelf regularly, then by the titles of chapters we may be directed to peruſe ſeveral particular chapters or ſections, and obſerve whether there be any thing valuable or important in them. We ſhall find hereby whether the author explains his ideas clearly; whether he reaſons ſtrongly; whether he methodizes well; whether his thoughts and ſenſe be manly, and his manner polite; or, on the other hand, whether he be obſcure, weak, trifling, and confuſed; or, finally, whether the matter may not be ſolid and ſubſtantial, though the manner or ſtyle be rude and diſagreeable.

II. By having run through ſeveral chapters and ſections in this manner, we may generally judge whether the treatiſe be worth peruſal or not. But if, by ſuch an occaſional ſurvey of ſome chapters, our expectation be utterly diſcouraged, we may lay aſide that book; for there is great probability he can be but an indifferent writer on that ſubject, if he affords but one prize to divers blanks, and it may be ſome downright blots too. The piece can hardly be valuable if, in ſeven or eight pages we peruſe, there be but little truth, evidence, force of reaſoning, beauty, and ingenuity of thought, mingled with much errour, ignorance, impertinence, dulneſs, mean and common thoughts, inacuracy, ſophiſtry, railing, &c. Life is too ſhort, and time is too precious, to read every new book quite over, in order to find that it is not worth the reading.

III. There are ſome general miſtakes which perſons are frequently guilty of in paſſing a judgment on the books they read.

One is this; when a treatiſe is written but tolerably well, we are ready to paſs a favourable judgment of it; and ſometimes to exalt its character far beyond its merit, if it agree with our own principles, and ſupport the opinions of our party. On the other hand, if the author be of different ſentiments, and eſpouſe contrary principles, we can find neither wit nor reaſon, good ſenſe nor good language in it. Whereas, alas!

if our opinions of things were certain and infallible truth; yet a ſilly author may draw his pen in the defence of them, and attack even groſs errours with feeble and ridiculous arguments. Truth in this world is not always ſupported by the wiſeſt and ſafeſt methods; and errour, though it can never be maintained by juſt reaſoning, yet may be artfully covered and defended. An ingenious writer may put excellent colours on his own miſtakes. Some SOCINIANS, who deny the atonement of CHRIST, have written well, and with much appearance of argument for their own unſcriptural ſentiments; and ſome writers for the TRINITY and ſatisfaction of CHRIST have expoſed themſelves and the ſacred doctrine, by their feeble and fooliſh manner of handling it. Books are never to be judged of merely by their ſubject or the opinion they repreſent, but by the juſtneſs of their ſentiments, the beauty of their manner, the force of their expreſſion, or the ſtrength of reaſon, and the weight of juſt and proper argument which appears in them.

But this folly and weakneſs of trifling, inſtead of arguing, does not happen to fall only to the ſhare of Chriſtian writers. There are ſome who have taken the pen in hand to ſupport the deiſtical or antichriſtian ſcheme of our days, who make big pretences to reaſon on all occaſions, but ſeem to have left it quite behind them when they are jeſting with the bible, and grinning at the books which we call ſacred. Some of theſe performances would ſcarce have been thought tolerable, had they not aſſaulted the Chriſtian faith; though they are now grown up to a place amongſt the admired pens. I much queſtion whether ſeveral of the rhapſodies called the Characteriſtics would ever have ſurvived the firſt edition, had they not diſcovered ſo ſtrong a tincture of infidelity, and now and then caſt out a profane ſneer at our holy religion. I have ſometimes indeed been ready to wonder, how a book, in the main ſo looſely written, ſhould ever obtain ſo many readers amongſt men of ſenſe. Surely they muſt be conſcious in the peruſal, that ſometimes a patrician may write as idly as a man of plebeian rank, and trifle as much as an old ſchool man, though it is in another form. I am forced to ſay there are few books that ever I read, which made any pretences to a great genius, from which I derived ſo little valuable knowledge as from theſe treatiſes. There is indeed amongſt them a lively pertneſs, a parade of literature, and much of what ſome folks now a days call politeneſs; but it is hard that we ſhould be bound to admire all the reveries of this author, under the penalty of being unfaſhionable.

Another miſtake, which ſome perſons fall into, is this; when they read a treatiſe on a ſubject with which they have but little acquaintance, they find almoſt every thing new and ſtrange to them; their underſtandings are greatly entertained and improved by the occurrence of many things which were unknown to them before, they admire the treatiſe, and commend the author at once; whereas, if they had attained a good degree of ſkill in that ſcience, perhaps they would find that the author had written very poorly, that neither his ſenſe nor his method was juſt and proper, and that he had nothing in him but what was very common or trivial in his diſcourſes on that ſubject.

Hence it comes to paſs, that CARIO and FABER, who were both bred up to labour, and unacquainted with the ſciences, ſhall admire one of the weekly papers, or a little pamphlet that talks pertly on ſome critical or learned theme, becauſe the matter is all ſtrange and new to them, and they join to extol the writer to the ſkies; and for the ſame reaſon a young academic ſhall dwell on a journal or an obſervator that treats of trade and politics in a dictatorial ſtyle, and ſhall be laviſh in praiſe of the author. While at the ſame time perſons, well ſkilled in thoſe different ſubjects, hear the impertinent tattle with a juſt contempt; for they know how weak and awkward many of thoſe little diminutive diſcourſes are; and that thoſe very papers of ſcience, politics, or trade, which were ſo much admired by the ignorant, are perhaps but very mean performances; though it muſt be alſo confeſt there are ſome excellent eſſays in thoſe papers, and that upon ſcience as well as trade.

V. But there is a danger of miſtake in our judgment of books on the other hand alſo; for when we have made ourſelves maſters of any particular theme of knowledge, and ſurveyed it long on all ſides, there is perhaps ſcarce any writer on that ſubject who much entertains and pleaſes us afterwards, becauſe we find little or nothing new in him; and yet in a true judgment, perhaps his ſentiments are moſt proper and juſt, his explications clear, and his reaſonings ſtrong, and all the parts of the diſcourſe well connected and ſet in a happy light; but we knew moſt of thoſe things before, and therefore they ſtrike us not, and we are in danger of diſcommending them.

Thus the learned and the unlearned have their ſeveral diſtinct dangers and prejudices ready to attend them in their judgment of the writings of men. Theſe which I have mentioned are a ſpecimen of them, and indeed but a mere ſpecimen; for the prejudices that warp our judgments aſide from truth are almoſt infinite and endleſs.

VI. YET I cannot forbear to point out two or three more of theſe follies, that I may attempt ſomething toward the correction of them, or at leaſt to guard others againſt them.

There are ſome perſons of a forward and lively temper, and who are fond to intermeddle with all appearances of knowledge, will give their judgment on a book as ſoon as the title of it is mentioned, for they would not willingly ſeem ignorant of any thing that others know. And eſpecially if they happen to have any ſuperiour character or poſſeſſions of this world, they fancy they have a right to talk freely upon every thing that ſtirs or appears, though they have no other pretence to this freedom. DIVITO is worth forty thouſand pounds; POLITULUS is a fine young gentleman, who ſparkles in all the ſhining things of dreſs and equipage; AULINUS is a ſmall attendant on a miniſter of ſtate, and is at court almoſt every day. Theſe three happened to meet in a viſit, where an excellent book of warm and refined devotions lay in the window. What dull ſtuff is here? ſaid DIVITO; I never read ſo much nonſenſe in one page in my life, nor would I give a ſhilling for a thouſand ſuch treatiſes. AULINUS, though a courtier, and not uſed to ſpeak roughly, yet would not allow there was a line of good ſenſe in the book, and pronounced him a madman that wrote it in his ſecret retirement, and declared him a fool that publiſhed it after his death. POLITULUS had more manners than to differ from men of ſuch a rank and character, and therefore he ſneered at the devout expreſſions as he heard them read, and made the divine treatiſe a matter of ſcorn and ridicule; and yet it was well known, that neither this fine gentleman, nor the courtier, nor the man of wealth, had a grain of devotion in them beyond their horſes that waited at the door with their gilded chariots. But this is the way of the world; blind men will talk of the beauty of colours, and of the harmony or diſproportion of figures in painting; the deaf will prate of diſcords in muſic; and thoſe who have nothing to do with religion, will arraign the beſt treatiſe on divine ſubjects, though they do not underſtand the very language of the ſcripture, nor the common terms or phraſes uſed in Chriſtianity.

VII. I MIGHT here name another ſort of judges, who will ſet themſelves up to decide in favour of an author, or will pronounce him a mere blunderer, according to the company they have kept, and the judgment they have heard paſt upon a book by others of their own ſtamp or ſize, though they have no knowledge or taſte of the ſubject themſelves. Theſe with a fluent and voluble tongue become mere echoes of the praiſes or cenſures of other men. SONILLUS happened to be in the room where the three gentleman juſt mentioned gave out their thoughts ſo freely upon an admirable book of devotion; and two days afterwards he met with ſome friends of his where this book was the ſubject of converſation and praiſe. SONILLUS wondered at their dulneſs, and repeated the jeſts which he had heard caſt upon the weakneſs of the author. His knowledge of the book, and his deciſion upon it, was all from hearſay, for he had never ſeen it; and if he had read it through, he had no manner of right to judge about the things of religion, having no more knowledge, nor taſte of any thing of inward piety, than a hedgehog or a bear has of politeneſs.

When I had written theſe remarks, PROBUS, who knew all theſe four gentlemen, wiſhed they might have opportunity to read their own character as it is repreſented here. Alas! PROBUS, I fear it would do them very little good, though it may guard others againſt their folly; for there is never one of them would find their own name in theſe characters if they read them, though all their acquaintance would acknowledge the features immediately, and ſee the perſons almoſt alive in the picture.

VIII. THERE is yet another miſchievous principle which prevails among ſome perſons in paſſing a judgment on the writings of others, and that is, when from the ſecret ſtimulations of vanity, pride, or envy, they deſpiſe a valuable book, and throw contempt upon it by wholeſale; and if you aſk them the reaſon of their ſevere cenſure, they will tell you perhaps, they have found a miſtake or two in it, or there are a few ſentiments or expreſſions not ſuited to their tooth and humour.

Bavius cries down an admirable treatiſe of philoſophy, and ſays there is Atheiſm in it, becauſe there are a few ſentences that ſeem to ſuppoſe brutes to be mere machines. Under the ſame influence, Momus will not allow Paradiſe Loſt to be a good poem, becauſe he had read ſome flat and heavy lines in it, and he thought Milton had too much honour done him. It is a paltry humour that inclines a man to rail at any human performance becauſe it is not abſolutely perfect. Horace would give us a better example.

Sunt delicta quibus nos ignoviſſe velimus,
Nam neque chorda ſonum reddit quam vult manus et mens,
Nec ſemper feriet quodcunque minabitur arcus;
Atque ubi plura nitent in carmine, non ego paucis
Offendar maculis, quas, aut incuria fudit,
Aut humana parum cavit natura. Hor. de Art. poet.

Thus Englished.

Be not too rigidly cenſorious;
A ſtring may jar in the beſt maſter's hand,
And the moſt ſkilful archer miſs his aim;
So in a poem elegantly writ,
I will not quarrel with a ſmall miſtake,
Such as our nature's frailty may excuſe. Rosc.

This noble tranſlator of Horace, whom I here cite, has a very honourable opinion of Homer in the main, yet he allows him to be juſtly cenſured for ſome groſſer ſpots and blemiſhes in him.

For who without averſion ever look'd
On holy garbage, though by Homer *cook'd,*
Whoſe railing heroes, and whoſe wounded gods,
Make ſome ſuſpect he ſnores as well as nods.

Such wiſe and juſt diſtinctions ought to be made when we paſs a judgment on mortal things; but envy condemns by wholeſale. Envy is a curſed plant; ſome fibres of it are rooted almoſt in every man's nature, and it works in a ſly and imperceptible manner, and that even in ſome perſons who in the main are men of wiſdom and piety. They know not how to bear the praiſes that are given to an ingenious author, eſpecially if he be living and of their profeſſion, and therefore they will, if poſſible, find ſome blemiſh in his writings, that they may nibble and bark at it. They will endeavour to diminiſh the honour of the beſt treatiſe that has been written on any ſubject, and to render it uſeleſs by their cenſures, rather than ſuffer their envy to lie aſleep, and the little miſtakes of that author to paſs unexpoſed. Perhaps they will commend the work in general with a pretended air of candour, but paſs ſo many ſly and invidious remarks upon it afterward, as ſhall effectually deſtroy all their cold and formal praiſes*.

IX. WHEN a perſon feels any thing of this invidious humour working in him, he may by the following conſiderations attempt the correction of it. Let him think with himſelf how many are the beauties of ſuch an author whom he cenſures, in compariſon of his blemiſhes, and remember that it is a much more honourable and good natured thing, to find out peculiar beauties than faults. True and undiſguiſed candour is a much more amiable and divine talent than accuſation. Let him reflect again, what an eaſy matter it is to find a miſtake in all human authors, who are neceſſarily fallible and imperfect,

I confeſs where an author ſets up himſelf to ridicule divine writers and things ſacred, and yet aſſumes an air of ſovereignty and dictatorſhip, to exalt and almoſt deify all the Pagan ancients, and caſt his ſcorn upon all the moderns, eſpecially if they do but ſavour of miracles and the goſpel, it is fit the admirers of this author ſhould know that nature and theſe ancients are not the ſame, though ſome writers always unite them. Reaſon and nature never made theſe ancient Heathens their ſtandard, either of art or genius, of writing or heroiſm. Sir RICH. STEELE, in his little eſſay, called The Chriſtian Hero, has ſhewn our SAVIOUR and St. PAUL in a more glorious and tranſcendent light than a VIRGIL or a HOMER could do for their ACHILLES, ULYSSES or ÆNEAS; and I am perſuaded, if MOSES and DAVID had not been inſpired writers, theſe very men would have ranked them at leaſt with HERODOTUS and HORACE, if not given them the ſuperiour place.

---

* *I grant when wiſdom itſelf cenſures a weak and fooliſh performance, it will paſs its ſevere ſentence, and yet with an air of candour, if the author has any thing valuable in him; but envy will oftentimes imitate the ſame favourable airs, in order to make its falſe cavils appear more juſt and credible, when it has a mind to ſnarl at ſome of the brighteſt performances of a human writer.*

But where an author has many beauties conſiſtent with virtue, piety, and truth, let not little critics exalt themſelves, and ſhower down their ill nature upon him, without bounds or meaſure; but rather ſtretch their own powers of ſoul till they write a treatiſe ſuperiour to that which they condemn. This is the nobleſt and ſureſt manner of ſuppreſſing what they cenſure.

A little wit, or a little learning with a good degree of vanity and ill nature, will teach a man to pour out whole pages of remark and reproach upon one real or fancied miſtake of a good author; and this may be dreſſed up by the ſame talents, and made entertaining enough to the world, who loves reproach and ſcandal; but if the remarker would but once make this attempt, and try to outſhine the author by writing a better book on the ſame ſubject, he would ſoon be convinced of his own inſufficiency, and perhaps might learn to judge more juſtly and favourably of the performance of other men. A cobler or a ſhoemaker may find ſome little fault with the latchet of a ſhoe that an APELLES had painted, and perhaps with juſtice too; when the whole figure and portraiture is ſuch as none but APELLES could paint. Every poor low genius may cavil at what the richeſt and the nobleſt hath performed; but it is a ſign of envy and malice, added to the littleneſs and poverty of genius, when ſuch a cavil becomes a ſufficient reaſon to pronounce at once againſt a bright author and a whole valuable treatiſe.

X. ANOTHER, and that a very frequent fault in paſſing a judgment upon books is this, that perſons ſpread the ſame praiſes or the ſame reproaches over a whole treatiſe, and all the chapters in it, which are due only to ſome of them. They judge as it were by wholeſale, without making a due diſtinction between the ſeveral parts or ſections of the performance; and this is ready to lead thoſe who hear them talk into a dangerous miſtake. FLORUS is a great and juſt admirer of the late archbiſhop of *Cambray* and mightily commends every thing he has written, and will allow no blemiſh in him; whereas the writings of that excellent man are not all of a piece, nor are thoſe very books of his, which have a good number of beautiful and valuable ſentiments in them, to be recommended throughout, or all at once without diſtinction. There is his demonſtration of the exiſtence and attributes of God, which has juſtly gained an univerſal eſteem, for bringing down ſome new and noble thoughts of the wiſdom of the creation to the underſtanding of the unleaned, and they are ſuch as well deſerve the peruſal of the men of ſcience, perhaps as far as the 50th ſection; but there are many of the following ſections which are weakly written, and ſome of them built upon an enthuſiaſtical and miſtaken ſcheme, akin to the peculiar opinions of father MALEBRANCHE; as *Sect.* 51. 53. That we know the finite only by the ideas of the infinite. *Sect.* 55, 60. That the ſuperiour reaſon in man is God himſelf acting in him. *Sect.* 51, 62, That the idea of unity cannot be taken from creatures, but from God only; and ſeveral of his Sections, from 65, to 68, upon the doctrine of liberty, ſeem to be inconſiſtent. Again, toward the end of his book, he ſpends more time and pains than are needful in refuting the Epicurean fancy of atoms, moving eternally through infinite changes, which might be done effectually in a much ſhorter and better way.

/So in his Poſthumous Eſſays, and his Letters, there are many admirable thoughts in practical and experimental religion, and very beautiful and divine ſentiments in devotion; but ſometimes in large paragraphs, or in whole chapters together, you find him in the clouds of myſtic divinity, and he never deſcends within the reach of common ideas or common ſenſe.

But remember this alſo, that there are but few ſuch authors as this great man, who talks ſo very weakly ſometimes, and yet in other places is ſo much ſuperiour to the greateſt part of writers.

There are other inſtances of this kind where men of good ſenſe in the main ſet up for judges, but they carry too many of their paſſions about them, and then like lovers, they are in rapture at the name of their fair idol; they laviſh out all their increaſe upon that ſhrine, and cannot bear the thought of admitting a blemiſh in them.

You ſhall hear ALTISONO not only admire CASIMIRE of *Poland*, in his lyrics, as the utmoſt purity and perfection of Latin poeſy, but he will allow nothing in him to be extravagant or faulty, and will vindicate every line; nor can I much wonder at it, when I have heard him pronounce LUCAN the beſt of the ancient *Latins*, and idolize his very weakneſſes and miſtakes. I will readily acknowledge the Odes of CASIMIRE to have more ſpirit and force, more magnificence and fire in them, and in twenty places ariſe to more dignity and beauty than I could ever meet with in any of our modern poets; yet I am afraid to ſay, that *Pala ſutilis e luce* has dignity enough in it for a robe made for the Almighty, Lib. 4. Ode 7. l. 37. or that the Man of virtue in Ode 3. l. 44. under the ruins of heaven and earth, will bear up the fragments of the fallen world with a comely wound on his ſhoulders.

———————*late ruenti*
Subjiciens ſua colla cælo
Mundum decoro vulnere fulciet;
Interque cæli fragmina.

Yet I muſt needs confeſs alſo, that it is hardly poſſible a man ſhould riſe to ſo exalted and ſublime a vein of poeſy as CASIMIRE, who is not in danger now and then of ſuch extravagancies; but ſtill they ſhould not be admired or defended; if we pretend to paſs a juſt judgment on the writings of the greateſt men.

MILTON is a noble genius, and the world agrees to confeſs it; his poem of Paradiſe Loſt is a glorious performance, and rivals the moſt famous pieces of antiquity; but that reader muſt be deeply prejudiced in favour of the poet, who can imagine him equal to himſelf through all that work. Neither the ſublime ſentiments, nor dignity of numbers, nor force or beauty of expreſſion are equally maintained, even in all thoſe parts which require grandeur or beauty, force or harmony. I cannot but conſent to Mr. DRYDEN's opinion, though I will not uſe his words, that for ſome ſcores of lines together, there is a coldneſs and flatneſs, and almoſt a perfect abſence of that ſpirit of poeſy which breathes, and lives, and flames in other pages.

XI. When you hear any perſon pretending to give his judgment of a book, conſider with yourſelf whether he be a capable judge, or whether he may not lie under ſome unhappy bias or prejudice, for or againſt it, or whether he has made a ſufficient inquiry to form his juſteſt ſentiments upon it.

Though he be a man of good ſenſe, yet he is uncapable of paſſing a true judgment of a particular book, if he be not well acquainted with the ſubject of which it treats, and the manner in which it is written, be it verſe or proſe; or if he hath not had opportunity or leiſure to look ſufficiently into the writing itſelf.

Again, though he be never ſo capable of judging on all other accounts, by the knowledge of the ſubject, and of the book itſelf; yet you are to conſider alſo whether there be any thing in the author, in his manner, in his language, in his opinions, and his particular party, which may warp the ſentiments of him that judgeth, to think well or ill of the treatiſe, and to paſs too favourable or too ſevere a ſentence concerning it.

If you find that he is either an unfit judge becauſe of his ignorance, or becauſe of his prejudices, his judgment of that book ſhould go for nothing. PHILOGRAPHO is a good divine, an uſeful preacher, and an approved expoſitor of ſcripture, but he never had a taſte for any of the polite learning of the age; he was fond of every thing that appeared in a devout dreſs, but all verſe was alike to him; he told me laſt week, there was a very fine book of poems publiſhed on the three Chriſtian graces, Faith, Hope, and Charity; and a moſt elegant piece of oratory on the four laſt things, Death, Judgment, Heaven, and Hell. Do you think I ſhall buy either of thoſe books merely on PHILOGRAPHO's recommendation!

CHAP. VI.

Of living Inſtruction and Lectures, of Teachers and Learners.

I

THERE are few perſons of ſo penetrating a genius, and of ſo juſt a judgment, as to be capable of learning the arts and ſciences without the aſſiſtance of teachers. There is ſcarce any ſcience ſo ſafely and ſo ſpeedily learned, even by the nobleſt genius and the beſt books, without a tutor. His aſſiſtance is abſolutely neceſſary for moſt perſons, and it is very uſeful for all beginners. Books are a ſort of dumb teachers; they point out the way to learning; but if we labour under any doubt or miſtake, they cannot anſwer ſudden queſtions, or explain preſent doubts and difficulties; this is properly the work of a living inſtructor.

II. There are very few tutors who are ſufficiently furniſhed with ſuch univerſal learning, as to ſuſtain all the parts and provinces of inſtruction. The ſciences are numerous, and many of them lie far wide of each other; and it is beſt to enjoy the inſtruction of two or three tutors at leaſt, in order to run through the whole encyclopedia, or circle of ſciences where it may be obtained; then we may expect that each will teach the few parts of learning which are committed to his care in greater perfection. But where this advantage cannot be had with convenience, one muſt ſupply the place of two or three common inſtructors.

III. It is not ſufficient that inſtructors be competently ſkilled in thoſe ſciences which they profeſs and teach; but they ſhould have ſkill alſo in the art or method of teaching, and patience in the practice of it.

It is a great unhappineſs indeed, when perſons by a ſpirit of party, or faction, intereſt, or by purchaſe, are ſet up for tutors, who have neither due knowledge of ſcience, nor ſkill in the way of communication. And, alas! there are others, who with all their ignorance and inſufficiency have ſelf admiration and effrontery enough to ſet up themſelves; and the poor pupils fare accordingly, and grow lean in their underſtandings.

It is to be obſerved alſo, there are ſome very learned men who know much themſelves, but have not the talent of communicating their knowledge; or elſe they are lazy, and will take no pains at it. Either they have an obſcure and perplexed way of talking, or they ſhow their learning uſeleſsly, and make a long periphraſis on every word of the book they explain, or they cannot condeſcend to young beginners, or they run preſently into the elevated parts of the ſcience; becauſe it gives themſelves greater pleaſure, or they are ſoon angry and impatient, and cannot bear with a few impertinent queſtions from a young, inquiſitive, and ſprightly genius; or elſe they ſkim over a ſcience in a very ſlight and ſuperficial ſurvey, and never lead their diſciples into the depths of it.

IV. A good tutor ſhould have characters and qualifications very different from all theſe. He is ſuch a one as can and will apply himſelf with diligence, concern, and indefatigable patience, to effect what he undertakes; to teach his diſciples, and ſee that they learn; to adapt his way and method, as near as may be, to the various diſpoſitions, as well as to the capacities, of thoſe whom he inſtructs, and to inquire often into their progreſs and improvement.

And he ſhould take particular care of his own temper and conduct, that there be nothing in him or about him which may be of ill example; nothing that may ſavour of a haughty temper, of a mean and ſordid ſpirit; nothing that may expoſe him to the averſion or contempt of his ſcholars, or create a prejudice in their minds againſt him and his inſtructions. But, if poſſible, he ſhould have ſo much of natural candour and ſweetneſs mixed with all the improvements of learning, as might convey knowledge into the minds of his diſciples with a ſort of gentle inſinuation and ſovereign delight, and may tempt them into the higheſt improvements of their reaſon by a reſiſtleſs and inſenſible force. But I ſhall have occaſion to ſay more on this ſubject, when I come to ſpeak more directly of the communication of knowledge.

V. The learner ſhould attend with conſtancy and care on all the inſtructions of his tutor; and if he happen to be at any time unavoidably hindered, he muſt endeavour to retrieve the loſs by double induſtry for time to come. He ſhould always recollect and review his lectures, read over ſome other author or authors on the ſame ſubject, confer upon it with his inſtructor or with his aſſociates, and write down the cleareſt reſult of his preſent thoughts, reaſonings and inquiries, which he may have recourſe to hereafter, either to reexamine them and to apply them to proper uſe, or to improve them further to his own advantage.

VI. A ſtudent ſhould not ſatisfy himſelf with bare attendance on the lectures of his tutor, unleſs he clearly takes up his ſenſe and meaning, and underſtands things which he teaches. A young diſciple ſhould behave himſelf ſo well as to gain the affection and the ear of his inſtructor, that on every occaſion he may with the utmoſt freedom aſk queſtions, and talk over his own ſentiments, his doubts and difficulties with him, and in a humble and modeſt manner deſire the ſolution of them.

VII. Let the learner endeavour to maintain an honourable opinion of his inſtructor, and heedfully liſten to his inſtructions, as one willing to be led by a more experienced guide; and though he is not bound to fall in with every ſentiment of his tutor, yet he ſhould ſo far comply with him, as to reſolve upon a juſt conſideration of the matter, and try and examine it thoroughly with an honeſt heart, before he preſumes to determine againſt him. And then it ſhould be done with great modeſty, with a humble jealouſy of himſelf, and apparent unwillingneſs to differ from his tutor, if the force of argument and truth did not conſtrain him.

VIII. It is a frequent and growing folly in our age, that pert young diſciples ſoon fancy themſelves wiſer than thoſe who teach them. At firſt view, or upon a very little thought, they can diſcern the inſignificancy, weakneſs, and miſtake of what their teacher aſſerts. The youth of our day, by an early petulancy, and pretended liberty of thinking for themſelves, dare reject at once, and that with a ſort of ſcorn, all thoſe ſentiments and doctrines which their teachers have determined, perhaps after long and repeated conſideration, after years of mature ſtudy, careful obſervation, and much prudent experience.

IX. It is true, teachers and maſters are not infallible, nor are they always in the right; and it muſt be acknowledged, it is a matter of ſome difficulty for younger minds to maintain a juſt and ſolemn veneration for the authority and advice of their parents, and the inſtructions of their tutors, and yet at the ſame time to ſecure to themſelves a juſt freedom in their own thoughts. We are ſometimes too ready to imbibe all their ſentiments without examination, if we reverence and love them; or, on the other hand, if we take all freedom to conteſt their opinions, we are ſometimes tempted to caſt off that love and reverence to their perſons which God and nature dictate. Youth is ever in danger of theſe extremes.

X. But I think I may ſafely conclude thus; though the authority of a teacher muſt not abſolutely determine the judgment of his pupils, yet young, raw, and unexperienced learners ſhould pay all proper deference that can be to the inſtructions of their parents and teachers, ſhort of abſolute ſubmiſſion to their dictates. Yet ſtill we muſt maintain this; that they ſhould never receive any opinion into their aſſent, whether it be conformable or contrary to the tutor's mind, without ſufficient evidence of it firſt given to their own reaſoning powers.

CHAP. VII.

Of learning a Language.

THE firſt thing required in reading an author, or in hearing lectures from a tutor, is, that you well underſtand the language in which they write or ſpeak. Living languages, or ſuch as are the native tongue of any nation in the preſent age, are more eaſily learnt and taught by a few rules, and much familiar converſe, joined to the reading of ſome proper authors. The dead languages are ſuch as ceaſe to be ſpoken in any nation; and even theſe are more eaſy to be taught, as far as may be, in that method wherein living languages are beſt learnt; that is, partly by rule, and partly by rote or cuſtom. It may not be improper in this place to mention a very few directions for that purpoſe.

I. BEGIN with the moſt neceſſary and moſt general obſervations and rules which belong to that language, compiled in the form of a grammar; and theſe are but few in moſt languages. The regular declenſions and variations of nouns and verbs ſhould be early and thoroughly learnt by heart, together with twenty or thirty of the plaineſt and moſt neceſſary rules of ſyntax.

But let it be obſerved, that in almoſt all languages ſome of the moſt common nouns and verbs have many irregularities in them. Such are the common auxiliary verbs *to be* and *to have*, *to do* and *to be done*, &c. The comparatives and ſuperlatives of the words *good*, *bad*, *great*, *much*, *ſmall*, *little*, &c. and theſe ſhould be learnt among the firſt rules and variations, becauſe they continually occur.

But as to other words which are leſs frequent, let but few of the anomalies or irregularites of the tongue be taught among the general rules to young beginners. Theſe will better come in afterwards to be learnt by advanced ſcholars, in a way of notes on the rules, as in the Latin Grammar called the Oxford Grammar, or in RUDDIMAN's notes on his Rudiments, &c. or they may be learnt by examples alone, when they occur; or by a larger and more complete ſyſtem of grammar, which deſcends to the more particular forms of ſpeech; ſo the heteroclite nouns of the Latin tongue, which are taught in the ſchool book called *Quæ Genus*, ſhould not be touched in the firſt learning of the rudiments of the tongue.

II. As the grammar by which you learn any tongue ſhould be very ſhort at firſt, ſo it muſt be written in a tongue with which you are well acquainted, and which is very familiar to you. Therefore I much prefer even the common Engliſh Accidence, as it is called, to any grammar whatever written in Latin for this end. The Engliſh Accidence has doubtleſs many faults; but thoſe editions of it which were printed ſince the year 1728, under the correction of a learned profeſſor, are the beſt; or the Engliſh Rudiments of the Latin tongue, by that learned North Briton Mr. RUDIMAN, which are perhaps the moſt uſeful books of this kind I am acquainted with; eſpecially becauſe I would not depart too far from the antient and common forms of teaching, which ſeveral good grammarians have done, to the great detriment of ſuch lads as have been removed to other ſchools.

The tireſome and unreaſonable method of learning the Latin tongue, by a grammar with Latin rules, would appear, even to thoſe maſters who teach it ſo, in its proper colours of abſurdity and ridicule, if thoſe maſters would attempt to learn the Chineſe or Arabic tongue, by a grammar written in the Arabic or in the Chineſe language. Mr. CLARK, of *Hull*, has ſaid enough in a few pages of the preface to his new grammar, 1723, to make that practice appear very irrational and improper; though he has ſaid it in ſo warm and angry a manner, that it has kindled Mr. RUDIMAN to write againſt him, and to ſay what can be ſaid to vindicate a practice, which, I think, is utterly indefenſible.

III. AT the ſame time, when you begin the rules, begin alſo the practice. As for inſtance; when you decline *muſa*, *muſæ*, read and conſtrue, the ſame day, ſome eaſy Latin by the help of a tutor, or with ſome Engliſh tranſlation. Chuſe a book whoſe ſtyle is ſimple, and the ſubject of diſcourſe very plain, obvious, and not hard to be underſtood; many little books have been compoſed with this view, as CORDERIUS' Colloquies, ſome of ERASMUS' little writings, the ſayings of the wiſe men of *Greece*, CATO's moral diſtichs, and the reſt which are collected at the end of Mr. RUDIMAN's Engliſh Grammar, or the Latin Teſtament of CASTELLIOS' tranſlation, which is accounted the pureſt Latin. Theſe are very proper on this occaſion, together with ESOP's and PHEDRUS' Fables, and little ſtories, and the common and daily affairs of domeſtic life, written in the Latin tongue. But let the higher poets, orators, hiſtorians, and other writers, whoſe language is more laboured, and whoſe ſenſe more remote from common life, be rather kept out of ſight, until there be ſome proficiency made in the language.

It is ſtrange that maſters ſhould teach children ſo early TULLY's Epiſtles, or orations, or the poems of OVID or VIRGIL, whoſe ſenſe is ſometimes difficult to find, becauſe of the great tranſpoſition of the words; and when they have found the grammatical ſenſe, they have very little uſe of it, becauſe they have ſcarce any notion of the ideas and deſign of the writer, it being ſo remote from the knowledge of a child; whereas little common ſtories and colloquies, and the rules of a child's behaviour, and ſuch obvious ſubjects, will much better aſſiſt the memory of the words by their acquaintance with the things.

IV. Here it may be uſeful alſo to appoint the learner to get by heart the common and more uſeful words, both nouns and adjectives, pronouns and verbs, out of ſome well formed vocabulary. This will furniſh him with names for the moſt familiar ideas.

V. As ſoon as the learner is capable, let the tutor converſe with him in the tongue which is to be learnt, if it be a living language, or if it be Latin, which is the living language of the learned world. Thus he will acquaint himſelf a little with it by rote as well as by rule, and by living practice as well as by reading the writings of the dead. For if a child of two years old by this method learns to ſpeak the mother tongue, I am ſure the ſame method will greatly aſſiſt and facilitate the learning of any other language to thoſe who are older.

VI. LET the chief leſſons and the chief exerciſes of ſchools, v. c. where Latin is learnt, at leaſt for the firſt year or more, be the nouns, verbs, and general rules of ſyntax, together with a mere tranſlation out of ſome Latin author into Engliſh; and let ſcholars be employed and examined by their teacher daily, in reducing the words to their original or theme, to the firſt caſe of nouns or firſt tenſe of verbs, and giving an account of their formations and changes, their ſyntax and dependencies, which is called parſing. This is a moſt uſeful exerciſe to lead boys into a complete and thorough knowledge of what they are doing.

The Engliſh tranſlations, which the learner has made, ſhould be well corrected by the maſter, and then they ſhould be tranſlated back again for the next day's exerciſe by the child into Latin, while the Latin author is withheld from him; but he ſhould have the Latin words given him in their firſt caſe and tenſe; and ſhould never be left to ſeek them himſelf from a dictionary; and the nearer he tranſlates it to the words of the author whence he derives his Engliſh, the more ſhould the child be commended. Thus will he gain ſkill in two languages at once. I think Mr. CLARK has done good ſervice to the public by his tranſlations of Latin books for this end.

But let the fooliſh cuſtom of employing every ſilly boy to make themes or declamations and verſes upon moral ſubjects in a ſtrange tongue, before he underſtands common ſenſe even in his own language, be abandoned and caſhiered for ever.

VII. As the learner improves, let him acquaint himſelf with the anomalous words, the irregular declenſion of nouns and verbs, the more uncommon connections of words in ſyntax, and the exceptions to the general rules of grammar; but let them all be reduced, as far as poſſible, to thoſe ſeveral original and general rules which he has learned, as the proper rank and place to which they belong.

VIII. WHILE he is doing this, it may be proper for him to converſe with authors which are a little more difficult, with hiſtorians, orators, and poets, &c. but let his tutor inform him of the Roman or Greek cuſtoms which occur therein. Let the lad then tranſlate ſome parts of them into his mother tongue, or into ſome other well known language, and thence back again into the original language of the author. But let the verſe be tranſlated into proſe, for poeſy does not belong to grammar.

IX. BY this time he will be able to acquaint himſelf with ſome of the ſpecial emphaſis of ſpeech, and the peculiar idioms of the tongue. He ſhould be taught alſo the ſpecial beauties and ornaments of the language; and this may be done partly by the help of authors who have collected ſuch idioms, and caſt them into an eaſy method, and partly by the judicious remarks which his inſtructor may make upon the authors which he reads, whereſoever ſuch peculiarities of ſpeech or ſpecial elegancies occur.

X. THOUGH the labour of learning all the leſſons by heart, that are borrowed from poetical authors, which they conſtrue, is an unjuſt and unneceſſary impoſition upon the learner, yet he muſt take the pains to commit to memory the moſt neceſſary, if not all the common rules of grammar, with an example or two under each of them; and ſome of the ſelect and moſt uſeful periods or ſentences in the Latin or Greek authors which he reads, may be learnt by heart, together with ſome of the choicer leſſons out of their poets; and ſometimes whole epiſodes out of heroic poems, &c. as well as whole odes among the lyrics, may deſerve this honour.

XI. LET this be always carefully obſerved, that the learners perfectly underſtand the ſenſe as well as the language of all thoſe rules, leſſons, or paragraphs which they attempt to commit to memory. Let the teacher poſſeſs them of their true meaning, and then the labour will become eaſy and pleaſant; whereas to impoſe on a child to get by heart a long ſcroll of unknown phraſes or words, without any ideas under them, is a piece of uſeleſs tyranny, a cruel impoſition, and a practice fitter for a jackdaw or a parrot, than for any thing that wears the ſhape of a man.

XII. AND here, I think, I have a fair occaſion given me to conſider that queſtion which has been often debated in converſation, viz. Whether the teaching of a ſchool full of boys to learn Latin by the heathen poets, as OVID in his Epiſtles, and the ſilly fables of his Metamorphoſes, HORACE, JUVENAL, and MARTIAL, in their impure odes, ſatires, and epigrams, &c. is ſo proper and agreeable a practice in a Chriſtian country?

XIII. 1. I GRANT the language and ſtyle of thoſe men who wrote in their own native tongue, muſt be more pure and perfect in ſome nice elegancies and peculiarities, than modorn writers of other nations who have imitated them; and it is owned alſo, that the beauties of their poeſy may much excel; but in either of theſe things, boys cannot be ſuppoſed to be much improved or injured by one or the other.

XIV. 2. IT ſhall be confeſt too, that modern poets, in every living language, have brought into their works ſo many words, epithets, phraſes and metaphors, from the Heathen fables and ſtories of their gods and heroes, that in order to underſtand theſe modern writers, it is neceſſary to know a little of thoſe ancient follies; but it may be anſwered, that a good dictionary, or ſuch a book as the Pantheon, or hiſtory of thoſe Gentile deities, &c. may give ſufficient information of thoſe ſtories, ſo far as they are neceſſary and uſeful to ſchool boys.

XV. 3. I WILL grant yet further, that lads who are deſigned to make great ſcholars or divines, may, by reading theſe heathen poets, be taught better to underſtand the writings of the ancient fathers againſt the heathen religion; and they learn here what ridiculous fooleries the Gentile nations believed as the articles of their faith, what wretched and foul idolatries they indulged and practiſed as duties of religion, for want of the light of divine revelation. But this perhaps may be learnt as well either by the Pantheon, or ſome other collection, at ſchool; or after they have left the ſchool, they may read what their own inclinations lead them to, and whatſoever of this kind may be really uſeful for them.

XVI. BUT the great queſtion is, Whether all theſe advantages which have been mentioned, will compenſate for the long months and years that are waſted among their incredible and trifling romances, their falſe and ſhameful ſtories of the gods and goddeſſes and their amours, and the lewd heroes and vicious poets of the heathen world? Can theſe idle and ridiculous tales be of any real and ſolid advantage in human life? Do they not too often defile the mind with vain, miſchievous, and impure ideas? Do they not ſtick long upon the fancy, and leave an unhappy influence upon youth? Do they not tincture the imagination with folly and vice very early, and pervert it from all that is good and holy?

XVII. UPON the whole ſurvey of things it is my opinion that for almoſt all boys who learn this tongue, it would be much ſafer to be taught Latin poeſy, as ſoon and as far as they can need it, from thoſe excellent tranſlations of DAVID's Pſalms, which are given us by BUCHANAN in the various meaſures of HORACE; and the lower claſſes had better read Dr. JOHNSON's tranſlation of theſe pſalms, another elegant writer of the *Scots* nation, inſtead of OVID's Epiſtles; for he has turned the ſame pſalms, perhaps with greater elegancy, into elegiac verſe, whereof the learned W. BENSON, Eſq. has lately publiſhed a noble edition, and I hear that theſe pſalms are honoured with an increaſing uſe in the ſchools of

Holland and *Scotland*. A ſtanza or a couplet of theſe writers would now and then ſtick upon the minds of youth, and would furniſh them infinitely better with pious and moral thoughts and do ſomething towards making them good men and Chriſtians.

XVIII. A LITTLE book collected from the Pſalms of both theſe tranſlators, BUCHANAN and JOHNSON, and a few other Chriſtian poets, would be of excellent uſe for ſchools to begin their inſtructions in Latin poeſy; and I am well aſſured this would be richly ſufficient for all thoſe in lower rank, who never deſign a learned profeſſion, and yet cuſtom has fooliſhly bound them to learn that language.

But leſt it ſhould be thought hard to caſt HORACE and VIRGIL, OVID and JUVENAL, entirely out of the ſchools, I add, if here and there a few lyric odes, or pieces of ſatires, or ſome epiſodes of heroic verſe, with here and there an epigram of MARTIAL all which ſhall be clear and pure from the ſtains of vice and impiety, and which may inſpire the mind with noble ſentiments, fire the fancy with bright and warm ideas, or teach leſſons of morality and prudence, were choſen out of thoſe ancient Roman writers for the uſe of the ſchools, and were collected and printed in one moderate volume, or two at the moſt, it would be abundantly ſufficient proviſion out of the Roman poets for the inſtruction of boys in all that is neceſſary in that age of life.

Surely JUVENAL himſelf would not have the face to vindicate the maſters who teach boys his 6th ſatire, and many paragraphs of ſeveral others, when he himſelf has charged us,

Nil dictu fædum, viſuque hæc limina tangat
Intra quæ puer eſt. SAT. 14.

Suffer no lewdneſs, nor indecent ſpeech,
Th' apartment of the tender youth to reach, DRYDEN.

Thus far in anſwer to the foregoing queſtion.

But I retire; for Mr. CLARK, of *Hull*, in his treatiſe on Education, and Mr. PHILIPS, preceptor to the duke of *Cumberland*, have given more excellent directions for learning Latin.

XIX. When a language is learnt, if it be of any uſe at all, it is pity it ſhould be forgotten again. It is proper, therefore, to take all juſt opportunities to read ſomething frequently in that language, when other neceſſary and important ſtudies will give you leave. As in learning any tongue, dictionaries which contain words and phraſes ſhould be always at hand, ſo they ſhould be ever kept within reach by perſons who would remember a tongue which they have learnt. Nor ſhould we at any time content ourſelves with a doubtful gueſs at the ſenſe or meaning of any words which occur, but conſult the dictionary, which may give us certain information, and thus ſecure us from miſtake. It is mere ſloth which makes us content ourſelves with uncertain gueſſes; and indeed this is neither ſafe nor uſeful for perſons who would learn any language or ſcience, or have a deſire to retain what they have acquired.

XX. When you have learnt one or many languages ever ſo perfectly, take heed of prideing yourſelf in theſe acquiſitions; they are but mere treaſures of words, or inſtruments of true and ſolid knowledge, and whoſe chief deſign is to lead us into an acquaintance with things, or to enable us the more eaſily to convey thoſe ideas or that knowledge to others. An acquaintance with the various tongues is nothing elſe but a relief againſt the miſchief which the building of *Babel* introduced; and were I maſter of as many languages as were ſpoken at *Babel*, I ſhould make but a poor pretence to true learning or knowledge, if I had not clear and diſtinct ideas, and uſeful notions in my head under the words which my tongue could pronounce. Yet ſo unhappy a thing is human nature, that this ſort of knowledge of ſounds and ſyllables is ready to puff up the mind with vanity, more than the moſt valuable and ſolid improvements of it. The pride of a grammarian, or a critic, generally exceeds that of a philoſopher.

CHAP. VIII.

Of inquiring into the Senſe and meaning of any Writer or Speaker, eſpecially the ſenſe of the Sacred Writings.

IT is a great unhappineſs that there is ſuch an ambiguity in words and forms of ſpeech, that the ſame ſentence may be drawn into different ſignifications; whereby it comes to paſs, that it is difficult ſometimes for the reader exactly to hit upon the ideas which the writer or ſpeaker had in his mind. Some of the beſt rules, to direct us herein, are ſuch as theſe.

I. BE well acquainted with the tongue itſelf, or language wherein the author's mind is expreſſed. Learn not only the true meaning of each word, but the ſenſe which thoſe words obtain, when placed in ſuch a particular ſituation and order.

Acquaint yourſelf with the peculiar power and emphaſis of the ſeveral modes of ſpeech, and with the various idioms of the tongue. The ſecondary ideas, which cuſtom has ſuperadded to many words, ſhould alſo be known, as well as the particular and primary meaning of them, if we ſhould underſtand any writer. See Logic, Part I. Chap. 4. Sect. 3.

II. CONSIDER the ſignification of thoſe words and phraſes, more eſpecially in the ſame nation, or near the ſame age, in which that writer lived, and in what ſenſe they are uſed by authors of the ſame nation, opinion, ſect, or party.

On this account, we may learn to interpret ſeveral phraſes of the New Teſtament out of that verſion of the Hebrew bible into Greek, which is called the Septuagint; for though that verſion be very imperfect and defective in many things; yet it ſeems to me evident, that the holy writers of the New Teſtament made uſe of that verſion many times in their citation of texts out of the bible.

III. COMPARE the words and phraſes in one place of an author, with the ſame or kindred words and phraſes uſed in other places of the ſame author, which are generally called parallel places; and as one expreſſion explains another which is like it, ſo ſometimes a contrary expreſſion will explain its contrary. Remember always, that a writer beſt interprets himſelf; and as we believe the Holy Spirit to be the ſupreme agent in the writings of the Old and New Teſtament, he can beſt explain himſelf. Hence that theological rule ariſes, that ſcripture is the beſt interpreter of ſcripture; and therefore concordances, which ſhow us parallel places, are of excellent uſe for interpretation.

IV. CONSIDER the ſubject of which the author is treating and by comparing other places where he treats of the ſame ſubject, you may learn his ſenſe in the place which you are reading; though ſome of the terms which he uſes in thoſe two places may be very different.

On the other hand, if the author uſes the ſame words where the ſubject of which he treats is not juſt the ſame, you cannot learn his ſenſe by comparing thoſe two places, though the mere words may ſeem to agree; for ſome authors, when they are treating of a quite different ſubject, may uſe perhaps the ſame words in a very different ſenſe, as St. PAUL does the words, faith, law, and righteouſneſs.

V. OBSERVE the ſcope and deſign of the writer. Inquire into his aim and end in that book, ſection, or paragraph, which will help to explain particular ſentences; for we ſuppoſe a wiſe and judicious writer directs his expreſſions generally towards his deſigned end.

VI. WHEN an author ſpeaks of any ſubject occaſionally, let his ſenſe be explained by thoſe places where he treats of it diſtinctly and profeſſedly. When he treats of any ſubject in myſtical or metaphorical terms, explain them by other places where he treats of the ſame ſubject in terms that are plain and literal. When he ſpeaks in an oratorical, affecting, or perſuaſive way, let this be explained by other places where he treats of the ſame in a doctrinal or inſtructive way. When the author ſpeaks more ſtrictly, and particularly on any theme, it will explain the more looſe and general expreſſions. When he writes more largely it will explain the ſhorter hints and brief imitations; and wherever he writes more obſcurely, ſearch out ſome more perſpicuous paſſages in the ſame writer, by which to determine the ſenſe of that obſcurer language.

VII. CONSIDER not only the perſon who is introduced ſpeaking, but the perſons to whom the ſpeech is directed, the circumſtances of time and place, the temper and ſpirit of the ſpeaker, as well as the temper and ſpirit of the hearers. In order to interpret ſcripture well, there needs a good acquaintance with the Jewiſh cuſtoms, ſome knowledge of the antient Roman and Greek times and manners, which ſometimes ſtrike a ſtrange and ſurpriſing light on paſſages, which before were very obſcure.

VIII. In particular propoſitions, the ſenſe of an author may be ſometimes known by the inferences which he draws from them; and all thoſe ſenſes may be excluded, which will not allow of that inference.

Note. This rule indeed is not always certain in reading and interpreting human authors; becauſe they may miſtake in drawing their inferences; but in explaining ſcripture it is a ſure rule; for the ſacred and inſpired writers always make juſt inferences from their own propoſitions. Yet even in them we muſt take heed we do not miſtake an alluſion for an inference, which is many times introduced almoſt in the ſame manner.

IX. If it be a matter of controverſy, the true ſenſe of the author is ſometimes known by the objections that are brought againſt it. So we may be well aſſured, the Apoſtle ſpeaks againſt our juſtification in the ſight of God by our own works of holineſs, in the 3d, 4th, and 5th chapters of the Epiſtle to the *Romans*, becauſe of the objection brought againſt him in the beginning of the 6th chapter, viz. What ſhall we ſay then? ſhall we continue in ſin that grace may abound? Which objection could never have been raiſed, if he had been proving our juſtification by our own works of righteouſneſs.

X. In matters of diſpute, take heed of warping the ſenſe of the writer to your own opinion, by any latent prejudices of ſelf love and party ſpirit. It is this reigning principle of prejudice and party, that has given ſuch a variety of ſenſes both to the ſacred writers and others, which would never have come into the mind of the reader, had he not laboured under ſome ſuch prepoſſeſſions.

XI. For the ſame reaſon take heed of the prejudices of paſſion, malice, envy, pride, or oppoſition to an author, whereby you may be eaſily tempted to put a falſe and invidious ſenſe upon his words. Lay aſide therefore a cenſorious ſpirit; and read even an adverſary with attention and diligence, with an honeſt deſign to find out his true meaning; do not ſnatch at little lapſes and appearances of miſtake, in oppoſition to his declared and avowed meaning; nor impute any ſenſe or opinion to him which he denies to be his opinion, unleſs it be proved by the moſt plain and expreſs language.

Laſtly. Remember that you treat every author, writer, or ſpeaker, juſt as you yourſelves would be willing to be treated by others, who are ſearching out the meaning of what you write or ſpeak; and maintain upon your ſpirit an awful ſenſe of the preſence of God, who is the judge of hearts, and will puniſh thoſe who, by a baſe and diſhoneſt turn of mind, wilfully pervert the meaning of ſacred writers, or even of common authors, under the influence of culpable prejudice. See more, Logic, Part I. Chap. 6. Sect. 3. Directions concerning the deffinition of terms.

CHAP. IX.

Rules of Improvement by Converſation.

I.

IF we would improve our minds by converſation, it is a great happineſs to be acquainted with perſons wiſer than ourſelves. It is a piece of uſeful advice therefore, to get the favour of their converſation frequently, as far as circumſtances will allow; aud if they happen to be a little reſerved, uſe all obliging methods to draw out of them what may increaſe your own knowledge.

II. WHATSOEVER company you are in, waſte not the time in trifle and impertinence. If you ſpend ſome hours amongſt children, talk with them according to their capacity; mark the young buddings of infant reaſon; obſerve the different motions and diſtinct workings of the animal and the mind, as far as you can diſcern them; take notice by what degrees the little creature grows up to the uſe of his reaſoning powers, and what early prejudices beſet and endanger his underſtanding. By theſe means you will learn how to addreſs yourſelf to children for their benefit, and perhaps you may derive ſome uſeful philoſophemes or theorems for your own entertainment.

III. If you happen to be in company with a merchant or a ſailor, a farmer or a mechanic, a milk maid or a ſpinſter, lead them into diſcourſe of the matters of their own peculiar province or profeſſion; for every one knows, or ſhould know, his own buſineſs beſt. In this ſenſe a common mechanic is wiſer than a philoſopher. By this mean you may gain ſome improvement in knowledge from every one you meet.

IV. Confine not yourſelf always to one ſort of company, or to perſons of the ſame party or opinion, either in matters of learning, religion, or the civil life, leſt if you ſhould happen to be nurſed up or educated in early miſtake, you ſhould be confirmed and eſtabliſhed in the ſame miſtake, by converſing only with perſons of the ſame ſentiments. A free and general converſation with men of very various countries, and different parties, opinions, and practices ,ſo far as it may be done ſafely, is of excellent uſe to undeceive us in many wrong judgments which we may have framed, and to lead us into juſter thoughts. It is ſaid when the King of *Siam*, near *China*, firſt converſed with ſome European merchants, who ſought the favour of trading on his coaſt, he inquired of them ſome of the common appearances of ſummer and winter in their country ; and when they told him of water growing ſo hard in their rivers, that men, and horſes, and laden carriages paſſed over it, and that rain ſometimes fell down as white and light as feathers, and ſometimes almoſt as hard as ſtones, he would not believe a ſyllable they ſaid; for ice, ſnow, and hail, were names and things utterly unknown to him, and to his ſubjects in that hot climate ; he renounced all traffic with ſuch ſhameful liars, and would not ſuffer them to trade with his people. See here the natural effects of groſs ignorance.

Converſation with foreigners on various occaſions, has a happy influence to enlarge our minds, and to ſet them free from many errours and groſs prejudices we are ready to imbibe concerning them. Domicillus has never travelled five miles from his mother's chimney, and he imagines all outlandiſh men are Papiſhes, and worſhip nothing but a croſs. Tityrus, the ſhepherd, was bred up all his life in the country, and never ſaw *Rome* ; he fancied it to be only a huge village, and was therefore infinitely ſurpriſed to find ſuch palaces, ſuch ſtreets, ſuch glittering treaſures and gay magnificence, as his firſt journey to the city ſhewed him, and with wonder he confeſſes his folly and miſtake.

So VIRGIL introduces a poor ſhepherd.

Urbem quam dicunt Romam, Melibœe, putavi
Stultus ego huic noſtræ ſimilem, quo ſæpe ſolemus
Paſtores ovium teneros depellere fœtas, &c.

Thus ENGLISHED.

Fool that I was, I thought imperial Rome
Like market towns, where once a week we come,
And thither drive our tender lambs from home.

Converſation would have given TITYRUS a better notion of *Rome*, though he had never happened to travel thither.

V. IN mixed company, among acquaintance and ſtrangers, endeavour to learn ſomething from all. Be ſwift to hear, but be cautious of your tongue, leſt you betray your ignorance, and perhaps offend ſome of thoſe who are preſent too. The ſcripture ſeverely cenſures thoſe who ſpeak evil of the things they know not. Acquaint yourſelf therefore ſometimes with perſons and parties which are far diſtant from your common life and cuſtoms; this is a way whereby you may form a wiſer opinion of men and things. Prove all things, and hold faſt that which is good, is a divine rule, and it comes from the Father of light and truth. But young perſons ſhould practiſe it indeed with due limitation, and under the eye of their elders.

VI. BE not frighted nor provoked at opinions different from your own. Some perſons are ſo confident they are in the right, that they will not come within the hearing of any notions but their own; they canton out to themſelves a little province in the intellectual world, where they fancy the light ſhines, and all the reſt is darkneſs. They never venture into the ocean of knowledge, nor ſurvey the riches of other minds which are as ſolid and as uſeful, and perhaps are finer gold, than what they ever poſſeſſed. Let not men imagine there is no certain truth but in the ſciences which they ſtudy, and amongſt that party in which they were born and educated.

VII. BELIEVE that it is poſſible to learn ſomething from perſons much below yourſelf. We are all ſhort ſighted creatures; our views are alſo narrow and limited; we often ſee but one ſide of a matter, and do not extend our ſight far and wide enough to reach every thing that has a connexion with the thing we talk of; we ſee but in part, and know but in part, therefore it is no wonder we form not right concluſions, becauſe we do not ſurvey the whole of any ſubject or argument. Even the proudeſt admirer of his own parts might find it uſeful to conſult with others, though of inferiour capacity and penetration. We have a different proſpect of the ſame thing, if I may ſo ſpeak, according to the different poſition of our underſtandings toward it; a weaker man may ſometimes light on notions which have eſcaped a wiſer, and which the wiſer man might make a happy uſe of, if he would condeſcend to take notice of them.

VIII. It is of conſiderable advantage when we are purſuing any difficult point of knowledge, to have a ſociety of ingenious correſpondents at hand, to whom we may propoſe it; for every man has ſomething of a different genius and a various turn of mind, whereby the ſubject propoſed will be ſhown in all its lights, it will be repreſented in all its forms, and every ſide of it be turned to view, that a juſter judgment may be framed.

IX. To make converſation more valuable and uſeful, whether it be in a deſigned or accidental viſit, among perſons of the ſame or of different ſexes, after the neceſſary ſalutations are finiſhed, and the ſtream of common talk begins to heſitate, or runs flat and low, let ſome one perſon take a book which may be agreeable to the whole company, and by common conſent let him read in it ten lines, or a paragraph or two, or a few pages, till ſome word or ſentence gives an occaſion for any of the company to offer a thought or two relating to that ſubject. Interuption of the reader ſhould be no blame, for converſation is the buſineſs; whether it be to confirm what the author ſays, or to improve it, to enlarge upon or to correct it, to object againſt it, or to aſk any queſtion that is akin to it; and let every one that pleaſes add his opinion, and promote the converſation. When the diſcourſe ſinks again, or diverts to trifles, let him that reads purſue the page, and read on further paragraphs or pages, till ſome occaſion is given by a word or ſentence for a new diſcourſe to be ſtarted, and that with the utmoſt eaſe and freedom. Such a method as this would prevent the hours of a viſit from running all to waſte; and by this mean even among ſchollars, they will ſeldom find occaſion for that too juſt and bitter reflection, I have loſt my time in the company of the learned.

By ſuch practice as this, young ladies may very honourably and agreeably improve their hours, while one applies herſelf to reading, the others employ their attention, even among the various artifices of the needle; but let all of them make their occaſional remarks or inquiries. This will guard a great deal of that precious time from modiſh trifling impertinence or ſcandal, which might otherwiſe afford matter for painful repentance.

Obſerve this rule in general, whenſoever it lies in your power to lead the converſation, let it be directed to ſome profitable point of knowledge or practice, ſo far as may be done with decency; and let not the diſcourſe and the hours be ſuffered to run looſe without aim or deſign; and when a ſubject is ſtarted, paſs not haſtily to another, before you have brought the preſent theme of diſcourſe to ſome tolerable iſſue, or a joint conſent to drop it.

X. ATTEND with ſincere diligence while any one of the company is declaring his ſenſe of the queſtion propoſed; hear the argument with patience, though it differ ever ſo much from your ſentiments, for you yourſelf are very deſirous to be heard with patience by others who differ from you. Let not your thoughts be active and buſy all the while to find out ſomething to contradict and by what means to oppoſe the ſpeaker, eſpecially in matters which are not brought to an iſſue. This is a frequent and unhappy temper and practice. You ſhould rather be intent and ſolicitous to take up the mind and meaning of the ſpeaker, zealous to ſeize and approve all that is true in his diſcourſe; nor yet ſhould you want courage to oppoſe where it is neceſſary; but let your modeſty and patience, and a friendly temper, be as conſpicuous as your zeal.

XI. When a man ſpeaks with much freedom and eaſe, and gives his opinion in the plaineſt language of common ſenſe, do not preſently imagine you ſhall gain nothing by his company. Sometimes you will find a perſon who in his converſation or his writings delivers his thoughts in ſo plain, ſo eaſy, ſo familiar and perſpicuous a manner, that you both underſtand and aſſent to every thing he ſaith, as faſt as you read or hear it: Hereupon ſome hearers have been ready to conclude in haſte, ſurely this man ſaith none but common things, I knew as much before, or I could have ſaid all this myſelf. This is a frequent miſtake. PELLUCIDO was a very great genius; when he ſpoke in the ſenate he was wont to convey his ideas in ſo ſimple and happy a manner, as to inſtruct and convince every hearer, and to inforce the conviction through the whole illuſtrious aſſembly; and that with ſo much evidence, that you would have been ready to wonder, that every one who ſpoke had not ſaid the ſame things; but PELLUCIDO was the only man that could do it, the only ſpeaker who had attained this art and honour. Such is the writer of whom HORACE would ſay,

> ——— *Ut ſibi quivis,*
> *Speret idem, ſudet multum, fruſtraque laboret*
> *Auſus idem.* De Art. Poet.

> *Smooth be your ſtyle, and plain and natural,*
> *To ſtrike the ſons of* Wapping *or* Whitehall.
> *While others think this eaſy to attain,*
> *Let them but try, and with their utmoſt pain,*
> *They'll ſweat and ſtrive to imitate in vain.*

XII. IF any thing ſeem dark in the diſcourſe of your companion, ſo that you have not a clear idea of what is ſpoken, endeavour to obtain a clearer conception of it by a decent manner of inquiry. Do not charge the ſpeaker with obſcurity, either in his ſenſe or his words, but intreat his favour to relieve your own want of penetration, or to add an enlightening word or two, that you may take up his whole meaning.

If difficulties ariſe in your mind, and conſtrain your diſſent to the things ſpoken, repreſent what objections ſome perſons would be ready to make againſt the ſentiments of the ſpeaker, without telling him you oppoſe. This manner of addreſs carries ſomething more modeſt and obliging in it, than to appear to raiſe objections of your own by way of contradiction to him that ſpoke.

XIII. WHEN you are forced to differ from him who delivers his ſenſe on a point, yet agree as far as you can, and repreſent how far you agree; and, if there be any room for it, explain the words of the ſpeaker in ſuch a ſenſe to which you can in general aſſent, and ſo agree with him; or at leaſt by a ſmall addition or alteration of his ſentiments ſhow your own ſenſe of things. It is the practice and delight of the candid hearer, to make it appear how unwilling he is to differ from him who ſpeaks. Let the ſpeaker know that it is nothing but truth conſtrains you to oppoſe him; and let that difference be always expreſſed in few, civil, and choſen words, ſuch as give the leaſt offence.

Be careful always to take SOLOMAN'S rule with you; and let your correſpondent fairly finiſh his ſpeech before you reply; for 'he that anſwereth a matter before he heareth it, it is folly and ſhame unto him.' Prov. xviii. 13.

A little watchfulneſs, care, and practice in younger life, will render all theſe things more eaſy, familiar, and natural to you, and will grow into habit.

XIV. As you ſhould carry about with you a conſtant and ſincere ſenſe of your own ignorance, ſo you ſhould not be afraid nor aſhamed to freely confeſs this ignorance, by taking all proper opportunities to inquire for further information; whether it be the meaning of a word, the nature of a thing, the reaſon of a propoſition, or the cuſtom of a nation, never remain in ignorance for want of aſking.

Many a perſon had arrived at ſome conſiderable degree of knowledge, had he not been full of ſelf conceit, and imagined that he had known enough already, or elſe was aſhamed to let others know that he was acquainted with it. God and man are ready to teach the meek, the humble, and the ignorant; but he that fancies himſelf to know any particular ſubject well, or that will not venture to aſk a queſtion about it, ſuch a one will not put himſelf into the way of improvement by inquiry and diligence. A 'fool may be wiſer in his own conceit than ten men who can render a reaſon,' and ſuch a one is very likely to be an everlaſting fool; and perhaps alſo it is a ſilly ſhame that renders his folly incurable.

Stultorum incurata pudor malus ulcera celet.
HOR. Epiſt. 16. Lib. I.

ENGLISH.

If fools have ulcers, and their pride conceal them;
They muſt have ulcers ſtill, for none can heal them.

XV. BE not too forward, eſpecially in the younger part of life, to determine any queſtion in company with an infallible and preremptory ſentence, nor ſpeak with aſſuming airs, nor with deciſive tones of voice. A young man in the preſence of his edlers ſhould rather hear and attend, and weigh the arguments which are brought for the poof or refutation of any doubtful propoſition; and, when it is your turn to ſpeak, propoſe your thoughts by way of inquiry. By this mean your mind will be kept in a fitter temper to receive truth, and you will be more ready to correct and improve your own ſentiments, where you have not been too poſitive in affirming them. But if you have magiſterially decided the point, you will find a ſecret unwillingneſs to retract, though you ſhould feel an inward conviction that you were in the wrong.

XVI. It is granted indeed, that a ſeaſon may happen, when ſome bold pretender to ſcience may aſſume haughty and poſitive airs to aſſert and vindicate a groſs and dangerous errour, or to renounce and vilify ſome important truth; and if he has a popular talent of talking, and there be no remonſtrance made againſt him, the company may be tempted too eaſily to give their aſſent to the impudence and infallibility of the preſumer. They may imagine a propoſition, ſo much vilified, can never be true, and that a doctrine, which is ſo boldly cenſured and renounced, can never be defended. Weak minds are too ready to perſuade themſelves, that a man would never talk with ſo much aſſurance unleſs he were certainly in the right, and could well maintain and prove what he ſaid. By this mean truth itſelf is in danger of being betrayed or loſt, if there be no oppoſition made to ſuch a pretending talker.

Now in ſuch a caſe even a modeſt man may aſſume airs too, and repel inſolence with his own weapons. There is a time, as Soloman the wiſeſt of men teaches us, when a fool ſhould be anſwered according to his folly, leſt he be wiſe in his own conceit, and leſt others too eaſily yield up their faith and reaſon to his imperious dictates. Courage and poſitivity are never more neceſſary than on ſuch an occaſion. But it is good to join ſome argument with them of real and convincing force, and let it be ſtrongly pronounced too.

When ſuch a reſiſtance is made, you ſhall find ſome of theſe bold talkers will draw in their horns, when their fierce and feeble puſhes againſt truth and reaſon are repelled with puſhing and confidence. It is a pity indeed that truth ſhould ever need ſuch ſort of defences; but we know that a triumphant aſſurance hath ſometimes ſupported groſs falſehoods, and a whole company have been captivated to errour by this mean, till ſome man with equal aſſurance has reſcued them. It is pity that any momentous point of doctrine ſhould happen to fall under ſuch reproaches, and require ſuch a mode of vindication; though I happen to hear it, I ought not to turn my back, and to ſneak off in ſilence, and leave the truth to lie baffled, bleeding, and ſlain. Yet I muſt confeſs, I ſhould be glad to have no occaſion ever given me, to fight with any man at this ſort of weapons, even though I ſhould be ſo happy as to ſilence his inſolence, and obtain an evident victory.

XVII. Be not fond of diſputing every thing pro and con, nor indulge yourſelf to ſhow your talent of attacking and defending. A logic, which teaches nothing elſe, is worth but little. This temper and practice will lead you juſt ſo far out of the way of knowledge, and divert your honeſt inquiry after the truth which is debated or ſought. In ſet diſputes every little ſtraw is often laid hold on to ſupport our own cauſe; every thing that can be drawn in any way, to give colour to our argument, is advanced, and that perhaps with vanity and oſtentation. This puts the mind out of a proper poſture to ſeek and receive the truth.

XVIII. Do not bring a warm party ſpirit into a free converſation, which is deſigned for mutual improvement in the ſearch of truth. Take heed of allowing yourſelf in thoſe ſelf aſſurances, which keep the doors of the underſtanding barred faſt againſt the admiſſion of any new ſentiments. Let your ſoul be ever ready to harken to further diſcoveries, from a conſtant and ruling conſciouſneſs of our preſent fallible and imperfect ſtate; and make it appear to your friends, that it is no hard taſk for you to learn and pronounce thoſe little words, *I was miſtaken*, however hard it be for the bulk of mankind to pronounce them.

XIX. As you may ſometimes raiſe inquiries for your own inſtruction and improvement, and draw out the learning, wiſdom, and fine ſentiments of your friends, who perhaps may be too reſerved or modeſt; ſo, at other times, if you perceive a perſon unſkilful in matter of debate, you may, by queſtions aptly propoſed in the Socratic method, lead him into a clearer knowledge of the ſubject; then you become his inſtructor in ſuch a manner as may not appear to make yourſelf his ſuperiour.

XX. Take heed of always affecting to ſhine in company above the reſt, and to diſplay the riches of your own underſtanding or your oratory, as though you would render yourſelf admirable to all who are preſent. This is ſeldom well taken in polite company; much leſs ſhould you uſe ſuch forms of ſpeech, as ſhould inſinuate the ignorance or dulneſs of thoſe with whom we converſe.

XXI. Though you ſhould not affect to flouriſh in a copious harangue and diffuſive ſtyle in company, yet neither ſhould you rudely interrupt and reproach him that happens to uſe it; but when he has done ſpeaking, reduce his ſentiments into a more contracted form; not with a ſhow of correcting, but as one who is doubtful whether you hit upon his true ſenſe or not. Thus matters may be brought more eaſily from a wild confuſion into a ſingle point, queſtions may be ſooner determined, and difficulties more readily removed.

XXII. Be not ſo ready to charge ignorance, prejudice, and miſtake upon others, as you are to ſuſpect yourſelf of it; and in order to ſhow how free you are from prejudices, learn to bear contradiction with patience; let it be eaſy to you to hear your own opinion ſtrongly oppoſed, eſpecially in matters which are doubtful and diſputable amongſt men of ſobriety and virtue. Give a patient hearing to arguments on all ſides, otherwiſe you give the company occaſion to ſuſpect that it is not the evidence of truth has led you into this opinion, but ſome lazy anticipation of judgment; ſome beloved preſumption, ſome long and raſh poſſeſſion of a party ſcheme, in which you deſire to reſt undiſturbed. If your aſſent has been eſtabliſhed upon juſt and ſufficient grounds, why ſhould you be afraid to let the truth be put to the trial of argument?

XXIII. Baniſh utterly out of all converſation, and eſpecially out of all learned and intellectual conference, every thing that tends to provoke paſſion, or raiſe a fire in the blood. Let no ſharp language, no noiſy exclamation, no ſarcaſms or biting jeſts be heard among you; no perverſe or invidious conſequences be drawn from each other's opinions, and imputed to the perſon; let there be no wilful perverſion of another's meaning; no ſudden ſeizure of a lapſed ſyllable to play upon it, nor any abuſed conſtruction of an innocent miſtake; ſuffer not your tongue to inſult a modeſt opponent that begins to yield; let there be no crowing and triumph, even where there is evident victory on your ſide. All theſe things are enemies to friendſhip, and the ruin of free converſation. The impartial ſearch of truth requires all calmneſs and ſerenity, all temper and candour; mutual inſtruction can never be attained in the midſt of paſſion, pride, and clamour, unleſs we ſuppoſe in the midſt of ſuch a ſcene there is a loud and penetrating lecture read by both ſides on the folly and ſhameful infirmities of human nature.

XXIV. Whensoever therefore any unhappy word ſhall ariſe in company that might give you a reaſonable diſguſt, quaſh the riſing reſentment, be it ever ſo juſt, and command your ſoul and your tongue into ſilence, leſt you cancel the hopes of all improvement for that hour, and transform the learned converſation into the mean and vulgar form of reproaches and railing. The man who begun to break the peace in ſuch a ſociety, will fall under the ſhame and conviction of ſuch a ſilent reproof, if he has any thing ingenuous about him. If this ſhould not be ſufficient, let a grave admonition, or a ſoft and gentle turn of wit, with an air of pleaſantry, give the warm diſputer an occaſion to ſtop the progreſs of his indecent fire, if not to retract the indecency and quench the flame.

XXV. Inure yourſelf to a candid and obliging manner in all your converſation, and acquire the art of a pleaſing addreſs, even when you teach as well as when you learn, and when you oppoſe as well as when you aſſert or prove. This degree of politeneſs is not to be attained without a diligent attention to ſuch kind of directions as are here laid down, and a frequent exerciſe and practice of them.

XXVI. If you would know what ſort of companions you ſhould ſelect for the cultivation and advantage of the mind, the general rule is, chuſe ſuch as by their brightneſs of parts, and their diligence in ſtudy, or by their ſuperiour advancement in learning, or peculiar excellency in any art, ſcience, or accompliſhment, divine or human, may be capable of adminiſtering to your improvement; and be ſure to maintain and keep ſome due regard to their moral character always, leſt while you wander in queſt of intellectual gain, you fall into the contagion of irreligion and vice. No wiſe man would venture into a houſe infected with the plague, in order to ſee the fineſt collections of any virtuoſo in Europe.

XXVII. Nor is it every ſober perſon of your acquaintance, no, nor every man of bright parts, or rich in learning, that is fit to engage in free converſation for the inquiry after truth. Let a perſon have ever ſo illuſtrious talents, yet he is not a proper aſſociate for ſuch a purpoſe, if he lie under any of the following infirmities.

(1.) If he be exceedingly reſerved, and hath either no inclination to diſcourſe, or no tolerable capacity of ſpeech and language for the communication of his ſentiments.

(2.) If he be haughty and proud of his knowledge, imperious in his airs, and is always fond of impoſing his ſentiments on all the company.

(3.) If he be poſitive and dogmatical in his own opinions, and will diſpute to the end; if he will reſiſt the brighteſt evidence of truth rather than ſuffer himſelf to be overcome, or yield to the plaineſt and ſtrongeſt reaſonings.

(4.) If he be one who always affects to outſhine all the company, and delights to hear himſelf talk and flouriſh upon a ſubject, and make long harangues, while the reſt muſt be all ſilent and attentive.

(5.) If he be a perſon of a whiffling and unſteady turn of mind, who cannot keep cloſe to a point of controverſy, but wanders from it perpetually, and is always ſolicitous to ſay ſomething, whether it be pertinent to the queſtion or not.

(6.) If he be fretful and peeviſh, and given to reſentment upon all occaſions; if he knows not how to bear contradiction, or is ready to take things in a wrong ſenſe; if he is ſwift to feel a ſuppoſed offence, or to imagine himſelf affronted, and then break out into a ſudden paſſion, or retain ſilent and ſullen wrath.

(7.) If he affect wit on all occaſions, and is full of his conceits and puns; quirks or quibbles, jeſts and repartees; theſe may agreeably entertain and animate an hour of mirth, but they have no place in the ſearch after truth.

(8.) If he carry always about him a ſort of craft, and cunning, and diſguiſe, and act rather like a ſpy than a friend. Have a care of ſuch a one as will make an ill uſe of freedom in converſation and immediately charge hereſy upon you, when you happen to differ from thoſe ſentiments which authority or cuſtom has eſtabliſhed.

In ſhort, you ſhould avoid the man in ſuch ſelect converſation, who practiſes any thing that is unbecoming the character of a ſincere, free, and open ſearcher after truth.

Now though you may pay all relative duties of life to perſons of theſe unhappy qualifications, and treat them with decency and love, ſo far as religion and humanity oblige you, yet take care of entering into a free debate on matters of truth or falſehood in their company, and eſpecially about the principles of religion. I confeſs, if a perſon of ſuch a temper happens to judge and talk well on ſuch a ſubject, you may hear him with attention, and derive what profit you can from his diſcourſe; but he is by no means to be choſen for a free conference in matters of inquiry and knowledge.

XXVIII. While I would perſuade you to beware of ſuch perſons, and abſtain from too much freedom of diſcourſe amongſt them, it is very natural to infer that you ſhould watch againſt the working of theſe evil qualities in your own breaſt, if you happen to be tainted with any of them yourſelf. Men of learning and ingenuity will juſtly avoid your acquaintance, when they find ſuch an unhappy and unſociable temper prevailing in you.

XXIX. To conclude; when you retire from company, then converſe with yourſelf in ſolitude, and inquire what you have learnt for the improvement of your underſtanding, or for the rectifying your inclinations, for the increaſe of your virtues, or for meliorating your conduct and behaviour in any future parts of life. If you have ſeen ſome of your company candid, modeſt, humble in their manner, wiſe and ſagacious, juſt and pious in their ſentiments, polite and graceful, as well as clear and ſtrong in their expreſſion, and univerſally acceptable and lovely in their behaviour, endeavour to impreſs the idea of all theſe upon your memory, and treaſure them up for your imitation.

XXX. If the laws of reaſon, decency, and civility have not been well obſerved amongſt your aſſociates, take notice of thoſe defects for your own improvement; and from every occurrence of this kind, remark ſomething to imitate or to avoid, in elegant, polite, and uſeful converſation. Perhaps you will find that ſome perſons preſent have really diſpleaſed the company, by an exceſſive and too viſible an affectation to pleaſe, that is by giving looſe to ſervile flattery, or promiſcuous praiſe. While others were as ready to oppoſe and contradict every thing that was ſaid. Some have deſerved juſt cenſure for a moroſe and affected taciturnity, and others have been anxious and careful leſt their ſilence ſhould be interpreted a want of ſenſe, and therefore they have ventured to make ſpeeches, though they had nothing to ſay which was worth hearing. Perhaps you will obſerve, that one was ingenious in his thoughts, and bright in his language; but he was too top full of himſelf, that he let it ſpill on all the company; that he ſpoke well indeed, but that he ſpoke too long, and did not allow equal liberty or time to his aſſociates. You will remark, that another was full charged to let out his words before his friend had done ſpeaking, or impatient of the leaſt oppoſition to any thing he ſaid. You will remember that ſome perſons have talked at large, and with confidence, of things which they did not underſtand, and others counted every thing tedious and intolerable, that was ſpoken on ſubjects out of their ſphere, and they would fain confine the conference entirely within the limits of their own narrow knowledge and ſtudy. The errours of converſation are almoſt infinite.

XXXI. By a review of ſuch irregularities as theſe, you may learn to avoid thoſe follies and pieces of ill conduct, which ſpoil converſation, or make it leſs agreeable and leſs uſeful; and by degrees you will acquire that delightful and eaſy manner of addreſs and behaviour in all uſeful correſpondences, which may render your company every where deſired and beloved; at the ſame time among the beſt of your companions you may make the higheſt improvement in your own intellectual acquiſitions, that the diſcourſe of mortal creatures will allow, under all our diſadvantages in this ſorry ſtate of mortality. But there is a day coming, when we ſhall be ſeized away from this lower claſs in the ſchool of knowledge, where we labour under the many dangers and darkneſſes, the errours and the incumbrances of fleſh and blood, and our converſation ſhall be with angels, and more illuminated ſpirits in the upper regions of the univerſe.

CHAP.

C H A P. X.

Of Diſputes.

I.

UNDER the general head of converſation for the improvement of the mind, we may rank the practice of diſputing; that is, when two or more perſons appear to maintain different ſentiments, and defend their own, or oppoſe the other's opinion, in alternate diſcourſe, by ſome methods of argument.

II. As theſe diſputes often ariſe in good earneſt, where the two contenders do really believe the different propoſitions which they ſupport; ſo ſometimes they are appointed as mere trials of ſkill in academies or ſchools, by the ſtudents. Sometimes they are practiſed, and that with apparent fervour in courts of judicature by lawyers, in order to gain the fees of their different clients; while both ſides perhaps are really of the ſame ſentiment with regard to the cauſe which is tried.

III. In common converſation, diſputes are often managed without any forms of regularity or order, and they turn to good or evil purpoſes, chiefly according to the temper of the diſputants. They may ſometimes be ſucceſsful to ſearch out truth, ſometimes effectual to maintain truth, and convince the miſtaken, but at other times a diſpute is a mere ſcene of battle in order to victory and vain triumph.

IV. There are ſome few general rules which ſhould be obſerved in all debates whatſoever, if we would find out truth by them, or convince a friend of his errour, even though they be not managed according to any ſettled forms of diſputation; and as there are almoſt as many opinions and judgments of things as there are perſons, ſo when ſeveral perſons happen to meet and confer together upon any ſubject, they are ready to declare their different ſentiments, and ſupport them by ſuch reaſonings as they are capable of. This is called debating, or diſputing, as is above deſcribed.

V. When perſons begin a debate, they ſhould always take care that they are agreed in ſome general principals or propoſitions, which either more nearly or remotely affect the queſtion in hand; for otherwiſe they have no foundation or hope of convincing each other; they muſt have ſome common ground to ſtand upon while they maintain the conteſt.

When they find they agree in ſome remote propoſitions, then let them ſearch further, and inquire how near they approach to each other's ſentiments; and whatſoever propoſitions they agree in, let theſe lay a foundation for the mutual hope of conviction. Hereby you will be prevented from running at every turn to ſome original and remote propoſitions and axioms, which practice both entangles and prolongs a diſpute. As for inſtance, if there was a debate propoſed betwixt a Proteſtant and a Papiſt, whether there be ſuch a place as purgatory? Let them remember that they both agree in this point, that Chriſt has made ſatisfaction or atonement for ſin, and upon this ground let them both ſtand, while they ſearch out the controverted doctrine of purgatory by way of conference or debate.

VI. The queſtion ſhould be cleared from all doubtful terms and needleſs additions; and all things that belong to the queſtion ſhould be expreſſed in plain and intelligible language. This is ſo neceſſary a thing, that without it, men will be expoſed to ſuch ſort of ridiculous conteſts as was found one day between the two unlearned combatants, Sartor and Sutor, who aſſaulted and defended the doctrine of tranſubſtantiation with much zeal and violence; but Latino happening to come into their company, and enquiring the ſubject of their diſpute, aſked each of them what he meant by that long hard word tranſubſtantiation. Sutor readily informed him, that he underſtood bowing at the name of Jeſus; but Sartor aſſured him that he meant nothing but bowing at the high alter. 'No wonder then,' ſaid Latino, 'that you cannot agree, when you neither underſtand one another, nor the word about which you contend.' I think the whole family of the Sartors and Sutors would be wiſer if they avoided ſuch kind of debates, till they underſtood the terms better. But alas! even their wives carry on ſuch conferences; the other day one was heard in the ſtreet explaining to her leſs learned neighbour the meaning of metaphyſical ſcience; and ſhe aſſured her, that as phyſics were medicines for the body, ſo metaphyſics was phyſic for the ſoul; upon this they went on to diſpute the point, how far the divine excelled the doctor.

Auditum admiſſi riſum teneatis amici?
Ridentem dicere verum quid vetat? HORACE.

Can it be faulty to repeat
A dialogue that walk'd the ſtreet?
Or can my graveſt friends forbear
A laugh, when ſuch diſputes they hear?

VII. AND not only the ſenſe and meaning of words, uſed in the queſtion, ſhould be ſettled and adjuſted between the diſputants, but the preciſe point of inquiry ſhould be diſtinctly fixed; the queſtion in debate ſhould be limited preciſely to its ſpecial extent, or declared to be taken in its more general ſenſe. As for inſtance; if two men are contending whether civil government be of divine right or not, it muſt be obſerved, the queſtion is not whether monarchy in one man, or a republic in multitudes of people, or an ariſtocracy in a few of the chief, is appointed of God as neceſſary; but whether civil government in its moſt general ſenſe, or in any form whatever, is derived from the will and appointment of God. Again; the point of inquiry ſhould be limited further. Thus the queſtion is not whether government comes from the will of God by the light of revelation, for that is granted; but whether it is derived from the will of God by the light of reaſon too. This ſort of ſpecification or limitation of the queſtion, hinders and prevents the diſputers from wandering away from the preciſe point of inquiry,

It is this trifling humour or diſhoneſt artifice of changing the queſtion, and wandering away from the firſt point of debate, which gives endleſs length to diſputes, and cauſes both the diſputants to part without any ſatisfaction. One chief occaſion of it is this; when one of the combatants feels his cauſe run low and fail, and is juſt ready to be confuted and moleſted, he is tempted to ſtep aſide to avoid the blow, and betakes himſelf to a different queſtion; thus, if his adverſary be not well aware of him, he begins to entrench himſelf in a new faſtneſs, and holds out the ſiege with a new artillery of thoughts and words. It is the pride of men which is the ſpring of this evil, and an unwillingneſs to yield up their own opinions even to be overcome by truth itſelf.

VIII. KEEP this always therefore upon your mind, as an everlaſting rule of conduct in your debates to find out truth, that a reſolute deſign, or even a warm affectation of victory, is the bane of all real improvement, and an effectual bar againſt the admiſſion of the truth which you profeſs to ſeek. This works with a ſecret, but a powerful and miſchievous influence in every diſpute, unleſs we are much upon our guard. It appears in frequent converſation. Every age, each ſex, and each party of mankind are ſo fond of being in the right, that they know not how to renounce this unhappy prejudice, this vain love of victory.

When truth with bright evidence is ready to break in upon a diſputant, and to overcome his objections and miſtakes, how ſwift and ready is the mind to engage wit and fancy, craft and ſubtilty, to cloud, perplex, and puzzle the truth, if poſſible? How eager is he to throw in ſome impertinent queſtion to divert from the main ſubject? How ſwift to take hold of ſome occaſional word, thereby to lead the diſcourſe off from the point in hand? So much afraid is human nature of parting with its errours, and of being overcome by truth. Juſt thus a hunted hare calls up all the ſhifts that nature has taught her, ſhe treads back her mazes, croſſes and confounds her former track, and uſes all poſſible methods to divert the ſcent, when ſhe is in danger of being ſeized and taken. Let puſs practiſe what nature teaches; but would one imagine, that any rational being ſhould take ſuch pains to avoid truth, and to eſcape the improvement of the underſtanding?

IX. When you come to a diſpute in order to find out truth, do not preſume that you are certainly poſſeſſed of it beforehand. Enter the debate with a ſincere deſign of yielding to reaſon, on which ſide ſoever it appears. Uſe no ſubtil arts to cloud and entangle the queſtion; hide not yourſelf in doubtful words and phraſes; do not affect little ſhifts and ſubterfuges to avoid the force of an argument; take a generous pleaſure to eſpy the firſt riſing beams of truth, though it be on the ſide of your opponent. Endeavour to remove the little obſcurities that hang about it, and ſuffer and encourage it to break out into open and convincing light; that while your opponent perhaps may gain the better of your reaſonings, yet you yourſelf may triumph over errour, and I am ſure that is a much more valuable acquiſition and victory.

X. WATCH narrowly in every diſpute, that your opponent does not lead you unwarily to grant ſome principle or propoſition, which will bring with it a fatal conſequence, and lead you inſenſibly into his ſentiment, though it be far aſtray from the truth; and by this wrong ſtep you will be, as it were, plunged into dangerous errours before you are aware. POLONIDES in free converſation led INCAUTA to agree with him in this plain propoſition, that the bleſſed God has too much juſtice in any caſe to puniſh* any being who is in itſelf innocent; till he not only allowed it with an unthinking alacrity, but aſſerted it in moſt univerſal and unguarded terms. A little after POLONIDES came in diſcourſe to commend the virtues, the innocence, and the piety of our bleſſed Saviour; and thence inferred, it was impoſſible that God ſhould ever puniſh ſo holy a perſon, who was never guilty of any crime. Then INCAUTO eſpied the ſnare, and found himſelf robbed and defrauded of the great doctrine of the atonement by the death of Chriſt, upon which he had placed his immortal hopes according to the goſpel. This taught him to bethink himſelf what a dangerous conceſſion he had made in ſo univerſal a manner, 'that God would never puniſh any being who was innocent,' and he ſaw it needful to recal his words and to explain them better, by adding this reſtriction or limitation, viz. 'Unleſs this innocent being were ſome way involved in another's ſin, or ſtood as a voluntary ſurety for the guilty;' by this limitation he ſecured the great and bleſſed doctrine of the ſacrifice of Chriſt for the ſins of men, and learnt to be more cautious in his conceſſions for time to come.

Two months ago FATALIO had almoſt tempted his friend FIDENS to leave off prayer, and to abandon his dependence on the providence of God in the common occurrences of life, by obtaining of him a conceſſion of the like kind. Is it not evident to reaſon, ſays FATALIO, that God's immenſe ſcheme of tranſactions in the univerſe was contrived and determined long before you and I were born? Can you imagine, my dear FIDENS, that the bleſſed God changes his original contrivances, and makes new interruptions in his courſe of them, ſo often as you and I want his aid, to prevent the little accidents of life, or to guard us from them? Can you ſuffer yourſelf to be perſuaded, that the great Creator of this world takes care to ſupport a bridge which was quite rotten, and to make it ſtand firm a few minutes longer till you had rode over it? Or will he uphold a falling tower while we two were paſſing by it, that ſuch worms as you and I are might eſcape the ruin?

---

* *The word* puniſh *here ſignifies, to bring ſome natural evil upon a perſon on account of moral evil done.*

But you ſay, you prayed for his protection in the morning, and he certainly hears prayer. I grant he knows it; but are you ſo weak, ſaid he, as to ſuppoſe the univerſal Lord of all had ſuch a regard to a word or two of your breath, as to make alterations in his own eternal ſcheme on that account? Nor is there any other way whereby his providence can preſerve you in anſwer to prayer, but by creating ſuch perpetual interruptions and changes in his own conduct according to your daily behaviour.

I acknowledge, ſays FIDENS, there is no other way to ſecure the doctrine of divine providence in all theſe common affairs; and therefore I begin to doubt, whether God does or ever will exert himſelf ſo particularly in our little concerns.

Have a care, good FIDENS, that you yield not too far; take heed leſt you have granted too much to FATALIO. Pray let me aſk you, could not the great God, who graſps and ſurveys all future and diſtant things in one ſingle view, could not he, from the beginning, foreſee your morning prayer for his protection, and appoint all ſecond cauſes to concur for the ſupport of that crazy bridge, or to make that old tower ſtand firm until you had eſcaped the danger? or could not he cauſe all the mediums to work ſo as to make it fall before you come near it? Can he not appoint all his own tranſactions in the univerſe, and every event in the natural world, in a way of perfect correſpondence with his own foreknowledge f all events, actions, and appearances of the moral world in every part of it? Can he not direct every thing in nature, which is but his ſervant, to act in perfect agreement with his eternal preſcience of our ſins, or of our piety? Hereby all the glory of providence, and our neceſſary dependence upon it by faith and prayer, are as well ſecured, as if he interpoſed to alter his own ſcheme every moment.

Let me aſk again, Did not he in his own councils or decrees appoint thunders and lightnings, and earthquakes, to burn up and deſtroy *Sodom* and *Gomorrah*, and turn them into a dead ſea, juſt at the time when the iniquities of thoſe cities were raiſed to their ſupreme height? Did he not ordain the foundations of the deep to be broken up, and overwhelming rains to fall down from heaven, juſt when a guilty world deſerved to be drowned; while he took care of the ſecurity of righteous Noah, by an ark which ſhould float upon that very deluge of waters? Thus he can puniſh the criminal when he pleaſes, and reward the devout worſhipper in the proper ſeaſon, by his original and eternal ſchemes of appointment, as well as if he interpoſed every moment anew. Take heed, Fidens, that you be not tempted away by ſuch ſophiſms of Fatalio, to withhold prayer from God, and to renounce your faith in his providence.

Remember this ſhort and plain caution of the ſubtil errours of men. Let a ſnake but once thruſt in his head at ſome ſmall unguarded fold of your garment, and he will inſenſibly and unavoidably wind his whole body into your boſom, and give you a pernicious wound.

XI. On the other hand, when you have found your opponent make any ſuch conceſſion as may turn to your real advantage in maintaining the truth, be wiſe and watchful to obſerve it, and make a happy improvement of it. Rhapsodus has taken a great deal of pains to detract from the honour of Chriſtianity, by ſly inſinuations that the ſacred writers are perpetually promoting virtue and piety by promiſes and threatenings; whereas neither the fear of future puniſhment, nor the hope of future reward, can poſſibly be called good affections, or ſuch as are the acknowledged ſprings and ſources of all actions truly good. He adds further, that this fear, or this hope, cannot conſiſt in reality with virtue or goodneſs, if it either ſtands as eſſential to any moral performance, or as a conſiderable motive to any good action; and thus he would fain lead Chriſtians to be aſhamed of the goſpel of Chriſt, becauſe of its future and eternal promiſes and threatenings, as being inconſiſtent with his notion of virtue; for he ſuppoſes virtue ſhould be ſo beloved and practiſed for the ſake of its own beauty and loveline ſs, that all other motives ariſing from rewards or puniſhments, fear or hope, do really take away juſt ſo much from the very nature of virtue as their influence reaches to; and no part of thoſe good practices are really valuable, but what ariſes from the mere love of virtue itſelf, without any regard to puniſhment or reward.

But obſerve in two pages afterwards, he grants that this principle of fear of future puniſhment, and hope of future reward, how mercenary and ſervile ſoever it may be accounted, is yet in many circumſtances a great advantage, ſecurity, and ſupport to virtue ; eſpecially where there is danger of the violence of rage or luſt, or any counter working paſſion to control and overcome the good affections of the mind.

Now the rule and the practice of Chriſtianity, or the goſpel, as it is cloſely connected with future rewards and puniſhments, may be well ſupported by this conceſſion. Pray, RHAPSODUS, tell me, if every man in this preſent life, by the violence of ſome counter working paſſion, may not have his good affections to virtue controled or overcome ? May not therefore his eternal fears and hopes be a great advantage, ſecurity, and ſupport to virtue in ſo dangerous a ſtate and ſituation, as one journey through this world towards a better ? And this is all that the defence of Chriſtianity neceſſarily requires.

And yet further, let me aſk our rhapſodiſt, if you have nothing elſe, Sir, but the beauty, and exellency, and lovelineſs of virtue to preach and flouriſh upon, before ſuch ſorry and degenerate creatures as the bulk of mankind are, and you have no future rewards or puniſhments with which to addreſs their hopes and fears, how many of theſe vicious wretches will you ever reclaim from all their varieties of profaneneſs, intemperance, and madneſs ? How many have you ever actually reclaimed by this ſmooth ſoft method, and theſe fine words ? What has all that reaſoning and rhetoric done which have been diſplayed by your predeceſſors the heathen moraliſts upon this excellency and beauty of virtue ? What has it been able to do towards the reforming of a ſinful world ? Perhaps now and then a man of better natural mould has been a little refined, and perhaps alſo there may have been here and there a man reſtrained or recovered from injuſtice and knavery, from drunkenneſs and lewdneſs, and vile debaucheries, by this fair reaſoning and philoſophy ; but have the paſſions of revenge and envy, of ambition and pride, and the inward ſecret vices of the mind been mortified merely by this philoſophical language ? Have any of theſe men been made new creatures, men of real piety and love to God ?

Go dreſs up all the virtues of human nature in all the beauties of your oratory, and declaim aloud on the praiſe of ſocial virtue, and the amiable qualities of goodneſs, till your heart or your lungs ache, among the looſer herds of mankind, and you will ever find, as your heathen fathers have done before, that the wild paſſions and appetites of men are too violent to be reſtrained by ſuch mild and ſilken language.

You may as well build up a fence of ſtraw and feathers to reſiſt a cannon ball, or try to quench a flaming grenado with a ſhell of fair water, as hope to ſucceed in theſe attempts. But an eternal heaven and an eternal hell carry divine force and power with them; this doctrine from the mouth of Chriſtian preachers has begun the reformation of multitudes; this goſpel has recovered thouſands among the nations from iniquity and death. They have been awakened by theſe awful ſcenes to begin religion, and afterwards their virtue has improved itſelf into ſuperiour and more refined principles and habits by divine grace, and riſen to high and eminent degrees, though not to a conſummate ſtate. The bleſſed God knows human nature much better than RHAPSODUS doth, and has throughout his word appointed a more proper and more effectual method of addreſs to it by the paſſions of hope and fear, by puniſhments and rewards.

If you read on four pages further in theſe writings, you will find the author makes another conceſſion. He allows that the maſter of a family uſing proper rewards and gentle puniſhments towards his children, teaches them goodneſs, and by this help inſtructs them in a virtue which afterwards they practiſe upon other grounds, and without thinking of a penalty or a bribe; and this, ſays he, is what we call a liberal education, and a liberal ſervice.

This new conceſſion of that author may alſo be very happily improved in favour of Chriſtianity. What are the beſt of men in this life? They are by no means perfect in virtue; we are all but children here under the great Maſter of the family, and he is pleaſed by hopes and fears, by mercies and corrections, to inſtruct us in virtue, and to conduct us onward towards the ſublimer and more perfect practice of it in the future world, where it ſhall be performed, in his own language, perhaps without thinking of penalties and bribes. And ſince he hath allowed that this conduct may be called a liberal education, and a liberal ſervice, let Chrſtianity then be indulged the title of a liberal education alſo, and it is admirably fitted for ſuch frail and ſinful creatures, while they are training up towards the ſublimer virtues of the heavenly ſtate.

XII. WHEN you are engaged in a diſpute with a perſon of very different principles from yourſelf, and you cannot find any ready way to prevail with him to embrace the truth by principles which you both freely acknowledge, you may fairly make uſe of his own principles to ſhow him his miſtake, and thus convince or ſilence him from his own conceſſions.

If your opponent ſhould be a Stoic philoſopher, or a Jew, you may purſue your argument in defence of ſome Chriſtian doctrine or duty againſt ſuch a diſputant, by axioms or laws borrowed either from ZENO or MOSES. Though you do not enter into the inquiry how many of the laws of MOSES are abrogated, or whether ZENO was right or wrong in his philoſophy, yet if from the principles and conceſſions of your opponent, you can ſupport your argument for the goſpel of Chriſt, this has been always counted a fair treatment of an adverſary and it is called *argumentum ad hominem*, or *ratio ex conceſſis*. St. PAUL ſometimes makes uſe of this ſort of diſputation, when he talks with Jews or Heathen philoſophers; and at leaſt he ſilences if not convinces them; which is ſometimes neceſſary to be done againſt an obſtinate and clamourous adverſary, that juſt honour might be paid to truths which he knew were divine, and that the only true doctrine of ſalvation might be confirmed and propagated among ſinful and dying men.

XIII. YET great care muſt be taken leſt debates break in upon your paſſions, and awaken them to take part in the controverſy. When the opponent puſhes hard, and gives juſt and mortal wounds to our opinion, our paſſions are very apt to feel the ſtrokes, and to riſe in reſentment and defence. Self is ſo mingled with the ſentiments which we have choſen, and has ſuch a tender feeling of all the oppoſition which is made to them, that perſonal brawls are very ready to come in as ſeconds, to ſucceed and finiſh the diſpute of opinions. Then noiſe, clamour, and folly appear in all their ſhapes, and chaſe reaſon and truth out of ſight.

How unhappy is the caſe of frail and wretched mankind in this dark or duſky ſtate of ſtrong paſſion and glimmering reaſon? How ready are we, when our paſſions are engaged in the diſpute, to conſider more what loads of nonſenſe and reproach we can lay on our opponent, than what reaſon and truth require in the controverſy itſelf. Diſmal are the conſequences mankind are too often involved in by this evil principle; it is this common and dangerous practice, that carries the heart aſide from all that is fair and honeſt in our ſearch after truth, or the propagation of it in the world. One would wiſh from his very ſoul that none of the chriſtian fathers had been guilty of ſuch follies as theſe.

But St. JEROME fairly confeſſes this evil principle, in his apology for himſelf to PAMMACHIUS 'that he had not ſo much regarded what was exactly to be ſpoken in the controverſy he had taken in hand, as what was fit to lay a load on JOVINIAN. Indeed, I fear this was the vile cuſtom of many of the writers even in the church affairs of thoſe times. But it will be a double ſcandal upon us in our more enlightened age, if we allow ourſelves in a conduct ſo criminal and diſhoneſt. Happy ſouls, who keep ſuch a ſacred dominion over their inferiour and animal powers, and all the influences of pride and ſecular intereſt, that the ſenſitive tumults, or theſe vicious influences, never riſe to diſturb the ſuperiour and better opperations of the reaſoning mind!

XIV. THESE general directions are neceſſary, or at leaſt uſeful in all debates whatever, whether they ariſe in occaſional converſation, or are appointed at any certain time or place; whether they are managed with or without any formal rules to govern them. But there are three ſorts of diſputation in which there are ſome forms and orders to be obſerved, and which are diſtinguiſhed by theſe three names, viz. Socratic, Forenſic, and Academic; that is, the diſputes of the ſchools.

Concerning each of theſe, it may not be improper to diſcourſe a little, and give a few particular directions or remarks about them.

CHAP. XI.

The Socratical Way of Diſputation.

I.

THIS method of diſpute derives its name from SOCRATES, by whom it was practiſed, and by other philoſophers in his age, long before ARISTOTLE invented the particular forms of ſyllogiſm in mood and figure, which are now uſed in ſcholaſtic diſputations.

II. THE Socratical way is managed by queſtions and anſwers in ſuch a manner as this, viz. If I would lead a perſon into the belief of a heaven and a hell, or future ſtate of rewards and puniſhments, I might begin in ſome ſuch manner of inquiry, and ſuppoſe the moſt obvious and eaſy anſwers.

Queſt. *Does not God govern the world?*

Anſ. Surely he that made it governs it.

Queſt. *Is not God both a good and a righteous governor?*

Anſ. Both theſe characters doubtleſs belong to him.

Queſt. *What is the true notion of a good and righteous governor?*

Anſ. That he puniſhes the wicked, and rewards the good.

Queſt. *Are the good always rewarded in this life?*

Anſ. No ſurely, for many virtuous men are miſerable here, and greatly afflicted.

Queſt. *Are the wicked always puniſhed in this life?*

Anſ. No certainly, for many of them live without ſorrow, and ſome of the vileſt of men are often raiſed to great riches and honour.

Queſt. *Wherein then doth God make it appear that he is good and righteous?*

Anſ. I own there is but little appearance of it on earth.

Queſt. *Will there not be a time then when the tables ſhall be turned, and the ſcene of things changed, ſince God governs mankind righteouſly?*

Anſ. Doubtleſs, there muſt be a proper time, wherein God will make that goodneſs and that righteouſneſs to appear.

Queſt. *If this be not before their death, how can it be done?*

Anſ. I can think of no other way but by ſuppoſing man to have ſome exiſtence after this life.

Queſt. *Are you not convinced that there muſt be a ſtate of reward and puniſhment after death?*

Anſ. Yes ſurely, I now ſee plainly that the goodneſs and righteouſneſs of God, as governor of the world, neceſſarily require it.

III. Now the advantages of this method are very conſiderable.

1. It repreſents the form of a dialogue or common converſation, which is a much more eaſy, more pleaſant, and a more ſprightly way of inſtruction, and more fit to excite the attention and ſharpen the penetration of the learner, than ſolitary reading or ſilent attention to a lecture. Man being a ſociable creature, delights more in converſation, and learns

better this way, if it could always be wiſely and happily practiſed.

2. This method hath ſomething very obliging in it, and carries a very humble and condeſcending air, when he that inſtructs ſeems to be the inquirer, and ſeeks information from him who learns.

3. It leads the learner into the knowledge of truth as it were by his own invention, which is a very pleaſing thing to human nature; and by queſtions pertinently and artificially propoſed, it does as effectually draw him on to diſcover his own miſtakes, which he is much more eaſily perſuaded to relinquiſh when he ſeems to have diſcovered them himſelf.

4. It is managed in a great meaſure in the form of the moſt eaſy reaſoning, always ariſing from ſomething aſſerted or known in the foregoing anſwer, and ſo proceeding to inquire ſomething unknown in the following queſtion, which again makes way for the next anſwer. Now ſuch an exerciſe is very alluring and entertaining to the underſtanding, while its own reaſoning powers are all along employed; and that without labour or difficulty, becauſe the queriſt finds out and propoſes all the intermediate ideas or middle terms.

IV. There is a method very near akin to this, which has much obtained of late, viz. writing controverſies by queſtions only, or confirming or refuting any poſition, or perſuading to or dehorting from any practice, by the mere propoſal of queries. The anſwer to them is ſuppoſed to be ſo plain and ſo neceſſary, that they are not expreſſed, becauſe the query itſelf carries a convincing argument in it, and ſeems to determine what the anſwer muſt be.

V. If chriſtian catechiſms could be framed in the manner of a Socratical diſpute by queſtion and anſwer, it would wonderfully enlighten the minds of children, and it would improve their intellectual and reaſoning powers, at the ſame time that it leads them into the knowledge of religion; and it is upon one account well ſuited to the capacity of children; for the queſtions may be pretty numerous, and the queriſt muſt not proceed too ſwiftly towards the determination of his point propoſed, that he may with more eaſe, with brighter evidence, and with ſurer ſucceſs, draw the learner on to aſſent to thoſe principles ſtep by ſtep, from whence the final concluſion will naturally ariſe. The only inconvenience would be this, that if children were to reaſon out all their way entirely into the knowledge of every part of their religion, it would draw common catachiſms into too large a volume for their leiſure, attention, or memory.

Yet thoſe who explain their catechiſms to them may, by due application and forethought, inſtruct them in this manner.

CHAP. XII.

Of Forenſic Diſputes.

I.

THE Forum was the public place in *Rome* where lawyers and orators made their ſpeeches before the proper judge in matters of property, or in criminal caſes, to accuſe or excuſe, to complain or defend; thence all ſorts of diſputations in public aſſemblies or courts of juſtice, where ſeveral perſons make their diſtinct ſpeeches for or againſt any perſon or thing whatſoever, but more eſpecially in civil matters may come under the name of forenſic diſputes.

II. THIS is practiſed not only in the courts of judicature, where a ſingle perſon ſit, to judge of the truth or goodneſs of any cauſe, and to determine according to the weight of reaſons on either ſide; but it is uſed alſo in political ſenates or parliaments, eccleſiaſtic ſynods, and aſſemblies of various kinds.

In theſe aſſemblies generally one perſon is choſen chairman or moderator, not to give a determination to the controverſy, but chiefly to keep the ſeveral ſpeakers to the rules of order and decency in their conduct; but the final determination of the queſtions ariſes from the majority of opinions or votes in the aſſembly, according as they are or ought to be ſwayed by the ſuperiour weight of reaſon appearing in the ſeveral ſpeeches that are made.

III. THE method of proceeding is uſually in ſome ſuch form as this. The firſt perſon who ſpeaks when the court is ſet, opens the caſe either more briefly or at large, and propoſes the caſe to the judge or the chairman, or moderator of the aſſembly, and gives his own reaſons for his opinion in the caſe propoſed.

IV. This perſon is ſucceeded by one, or perhaps two or ſeveral more, who paraphraſe on the ſame ſubject, and argue on the ſame ſide of the queſtion; they confirm what the firſt has ſpoken, and urge new reaſons to enforce the ſame; then thoſe who are of a different opinion ſtand up and make their ſeveral ſpeeches in a ſucceſſion, oppoſing the cauſe which others have maintained, giving their reaſons againſt it, and endeavouring to refute the arguments whereby the firſt ſpeakers have ſupported it.

V. After this, one and another riſes up to make their replies, to vindicate or to condemn, to eſtabliſh or to confute what has been offered before on each ſide of the queſtion; till at laſt, according to the rules, orders, and cuſtoms of the court or aſſembly, the controverſy is decided, either by a ſingle judge or the ſuffrage of the aſſembly.

VI. Where the queſtion or matter in debate conſiſts of ſeveral parts, after it is once opened by the firſt or ſecond ſpeaker, ſometimes thoſe who follow take each of them a particular part of the debate according to their inclination or to their prior agreement, and apply themſelves to argue upon that ſingle point only, that ſo the whole complexion of the debate may not be thrown into confuſion by the variety of ſubjects, if every ſpeaker ſhould handle all the ſubjects of debate.

VII. Before the final ſentence or determination is given, it is uſual to have the reaſons and arguments, which have been offered on both ſides, ſummed up and repreſented in a more compendious manner; and this is done either by the appointed judge of the court, or the chairman, or ſome noted perſon in the aſſembly, that ſo judgment may proceed upon the fulleſt ſurvey of the whole ſubject, that as far as poſſible in humun affairs, nothing may be done contrary to truth or juſtice.

VIII. As this is a practice in which multitudes of gentlemen, beſides thoſe of the learned profeſſions, may be engaged, at leaſt in their maturer years of life, ſo it would be a very proper and uſeful thing to introduce this cuſtom into our academies, viz. to propoſe caſes, and let the ſtudents debate them in a forenſic manner in the preſence of their tutor. There was ſomething of this kind practiſed by the *Roman* youth in their ſchools, in order to train them up for orators, both in the forum and in the ſenate. Perhaps JUVENAL gives ſome hints of it when he ſays,

> ———————— *et nos*
> *Conſilium dedimus Sylæ privatus ut altum*
> *Dormiret* ———————— SAT. 1.

> Where with men boys I ſtrove to get renown,
> Adviſing SYLLA to a private gown,
> That he might ſleep the founder.

Sometimes theſe were aſſigned to the boys as ſingle ſubjects of a theme or declamation; ſo the ſame poet ſpeaks ſarcaſtically to Hannibal,

> ——— *I demens, et ſævas curre per Alpes,*
> *Ut pueris placeas et daclametio fias.* SAT. 10.

> Go climb the rugged Alps, ambitious fool,
> To pleaſe the boys, and be a theme at ſchool.

See more of this matter in KENNET's Antiquities of *Rome*, in the ſecond Eſſay on the *Roman* Education.

CHAP. XIII.

Of Academic or Scholaſtic Diſputation.

THE common methods in which diſputes are managed in the ſchools of learning are theſe, viz.

I. THE tutor appoints a queſtion in ſome of the ſciences to be debated amongſt his ſtudents; one of them undertakes to affirm or deny the queſtion, and to defend his aſſertion or negation, and to anſwer all objections againſt it; he is called the reſpondent; and the reſt of the ſtudents in the ſame claſs, or who purſue the ſame ſcience, are the apponents, who are appointed to diſpute or raiſe objections againſt the propoſition thus affirmed or denied,

II. Each of the ſtudents ſucceſſively in their turn becomes the reſpondent or the defender of that propoſition, while the reſt appoſe it alſo ſucceſſively in their turns.

III. It is the buſineſs of the reſpondent to write a theſis in Latin, or ſhort diſcourſe on the queſtion propoſed; and he either affirms or denies the queſtion according to the opinion of the tutor, which is ſuppoſed to be the truth, and he reads at the beginning of the diſpute.

IV. In his diſcourſe, which is written with as great accuracy as the youth is capable of, he explains the terms of the queſtion, frees them from all ambiguity, fixes their ſenſe, declares the true intent and meaning of the queſtion itſelf, ſeparates it from other queſtions with which it may have been complicated, and diſtinguiſhes it from other queſtions which may happen to be akin to it, and then pronounces in the negative or affirmative concerning it.

V. When this is done, then in the ſecond part of his diſcourſe he gives his own ſtrongeſt arguments to confirm the propoſition he has laid down, that is, to vindicate his own ſide of the queſtion; but he does not uſually proceed to repreſent the objections againſt it, and to ſolve or anſwer them; for it is the buſineſs of the other ſtudents to raiſe objections in diſputing.

VI. Note. In ſome ſchools the reſpondent is admitted to talk largely upon the queſtion with many flouriſhes and illuſtrations, to introduce great authorities from ancient and modern writings for the ſupport of it, and to ſcatter Latin reproaches in abundance on all thoſe who are of a different ſentiment. But this is not always permitted, nor ſhould it indeed be ever indulged, leſt it teach youth to reproach inſtead of reaſoning.

VII. When the reſpondent has read over his theſis in the ſchool, the junior ſtudent makes an objection, and draws it up in the regular form of a ſyllogiſm; the reſpondent repeats the objection, and either denies the major or minor propoſition directly, or he diſtinguiſhes upon ſome word or phraſe in the major or minor, and ſhows in what ſenſe the propoſition may be true, but that *that* ſenſe does not affect the queſtion; and then declares that in the ſenſe which affects the preſent queſtion the propoſition is not true, and conſequently he denies it.

VIII. Then the opponent proceeds by another ſyllogiſm to vindicate the propoſition that is denied; again the reſpondent anſwers by denying or diſtinguiſhing.

Thus the diſputation goes on in a ſeries or ſucceſſion of ſyllogiſms and anſwers, till the objector is ſilenced, and has no more to ſay.

IX. WHEN he can go no further, the next ſtudent begins to propoſe his objection, and then the third and the fourth, even to the ſenior, who is the laſt opponent.

X. DURING this time the tutor ſits in the chair as preſident or moderator, to ſee that the rules of diſputation and decency be obſerved on both ſides; and to admoniſh each diſputant of any irregularity in their conduct. His work is alſo to illuſtrate and explain the anſwer or diſtinction of the reſpondent where it is obſcure, to ſtrengthen it where it is weak, and to correct it where it is falſe, and when the reſpondent is pinched with a ſtrong objection, and is at a loſs for an anſwer, the moderator aſſiſts him, and ſuggeſts ſome anſwer to the objection of the opponent, in defence of the queſtion, according to his own opinion or ſentiment.

XI. IN public diſputes, where the opponents and reſpondents chuſe their own ſide of the queſtion, the moderator's work is not to favour either diſputant; but he only ſits as preſident to ſee that the laws of diſputation be obſerved, and a decorum maintained.

XII. Now the laws of diſputation relate either to the opponent, or to the reſpondent, or to both.

The laws obliging the opponent are theſe,

1. That he muſt directly contradict the propoſition of the reſpondent, and not merely attack any of the arguments whereby the reſpondent has ſupported that propoſition; for it is one thing to confute a ſingle argument of the reſpondent, and another to confute the theſis itſelf.

2. Which is akin to the former, he muſt contradict or oppoſe the very ſenſe and intention of the propoſition as the reſpondent has ſtated it, and not merely oppoſe the words of the theſis in any other ſenſe; for this would be the way to plunge a diſpute into ambiguity and darkneſs, to talk beſide the queſtion, to wrangle about words, and to attack a propoſition different from what the reſpondent has eſpouſed, which is called *ignoratio elenchi*.

3. He muſt propoſe his argument in a plain, ſhort, and ſyllogiſtic form, according to the rules of logic, without flying to fallacies or ſophiſms; and as far as may be, he ſhould uſe categorical ſyllogiſms.

4. Though the reſpondent may be attacked either upon a point of his own conceſſion, which is called *argument ex-conceſſis*, or by reducing him to an abſurdity, which is called *reductio ad abſurdum*, yet it is the neateſt, the moſt uſeful and the beſt ſort of diſputation where the opponent draws his objections from the nature of the queſtion itſelf.

5. Where the reſpondent denies any propoſition, the opponent, if he proceed, muſt directly vindicate and confirm that propoſition, that is, he muſt make that propoſition the concluſion of his next ſyllogiſm.

6. Where the reſpondent limits or diſtinguiſhes any propoſition the opponent muſt directly prove his own propoſition in that ſenſe, and according to that member of the diſtinction in which the reſpondent denied it.

XIII. The laws that oblige the reſpondent are theſe.

1. To repeat the argument of the opponent in the very ſame words in which it was propoſed, before he attempts to anſwer it.

2. If the ſyllogiſm be falſe in the logical form of it, he muſt diſcover the fault according to the rules of logic.

3. If the argument does not directly and effectually oppoſe his theſis, he muſt ſhow this miſtake, and make it appear that his theſis is ſafe, even though the argument of the opponent be admitted; or at leaſt, that the argument does only aim at it collaterally, or at a diſtance, and not directly overthrow it, or conclude againſt it.

4. Where the matter of the opponent's objections is faulty in any part of it, the reſpondent muſt grant what is true in it, he muſt deny what is falſe, he muſt diſtinguiſh or limit the propoſition which is ambiguous or doubtful; and then granting the ſenſe in which it is true, he muſt deny the ſenſe in which it is falſe.

5. If an hypothetic propoſition be falſe, the reſpondent muſt deny the conſequence; if a disjunctive, he muſt deny the disjunction; if a categoric or relative, he muſt ſimply deny it.

6. It is ſometimes allowed for the reſpondent to uſe an indirect anſwer after he has anſwered directly; and he may alſo ſhow how the opponent's argument may be reported againſt himſelf.

XIV. The laws that oblige both diſputants are theſe,

1. Sometimes it is neceſſary there ſhould be a mention of certain general principles in which they both agree, relating

to the queſtion, that ſo they may not diſpute on thoſe things which either are or ought to have been firſt granted on both ſides.

2. When the ſtate of the controverſy is well known, and plainly determined and agreed, it muſt not be altered by either diſputant in the courſe of the diſputation; and the reſpondent eſpecially ſhould keep a watchful eye on the opponent in this matter.

3. Let neither party invade the province of the other; eſpecially let the reſpondent take heed that he does not turn opponent, except in retorting the argument upon his adverſary after a direct reſponſe; and even this is allowed only as an illuſtration or confirmation of his own reſponſe.

4. Let each wait with patience till the other has done ſpeaking. It is a piece of rudeneſs to interrupt another in his ſpeech.

Yet, though the diſputants have not this liberty, the moderator may do it, when either of the diſputants breaks the rules, and he may interpoſe ſo far as to keep them to order.

XV. It muſt be confeſt there are ſome advantages to be attained by academical diſputation. It gives vigour and briſkneſs to the mind thus exerciſed, and relieves the languor of private ſtudy and meditation. It ſharpens the wit and all the inventive powers. It makes the thoughts active, and ſends them on all ſides to find arguments and anſwers both for oppoſition and defence. It gives opportunity of viewing the ſubject of diſcourſe on all ſides, and of learning what inconveniences, difficulties, and objections attend particular opinions. It furniſhes the ſoul with various occaſions of ſtarting ſuch thoughts as otherwiſe would never have come into the mind. It makes a ſtudent more expert in attacking and refuting an errour, as well as in vindicating a truth. It inſtructs the ſcholar in the various methods of warding off the force of objections, and of diſcovering and refelling the ſubtil tricks of ſophiſters. It procures alſo a freedom and readineſs of ſpeech, and raiſes the modeſt and diffident genius to a due degree of courage.

XVI. But there are ſome very grievous inconveniences that may ſometimes overbalance all theſe advantages. For many young ſtudents, by a conſtant habit of diſputing grow impudent and audacious, proud and diſdainful, talkative and impertinent, and render themſelves intolerable by an obſtinate humour of maintaining whatever they have aſſerted, as well as by a ſpirit of contradiction, oppoſing almoſt every thing that they hear. The diſputation itſelf often awakens the paſſions of ambition, emulation, and anger; it carries away the mind from that calm and ſedate temper which is ſo neceſſary to contemplate truth.

XVII. It is evident alſo, that by frequent exerciſes of this ſort, wherein opinions true and falſe are argued, ſupported, and refuted on both ſides; the mind of man is led by inſenſible degrees to an uncertain and fluctuating temper, and falls into danger of a ſceptical humour, which never comes to an eſtabliſhment in any doctrines. Many perſons by this mean become much more ready to oppoſe whatſoever is offered in ſearching out truth; they hardly wait till they have read or heard the ſentiment of any perſon, before their heads are buſily employed to ſeek out arguments againſt it. They grow naturally ſharp in finding out difficulties; and by indulging this humour, they converſe with the dark and doubtful parts of a ſubject ſo long, till they almoſt render themſelves incapable of receiving the full evidence of a propoſition, and acknowledging the light of truth. It has ſome tendency to make a youth a carping critic, rather than a judicious man.

XVIII. I would add yet further, that in theſe diſputations the reſpondent is generally appointed to maintain the ſuppoſed truth, that is, the tutor's opinion. But all the opponents are buſy and warmly engaged in finding arguments againſt the truth. Now if a ſprightly young genius happens to manage his argument ſo well as to puzzle and gravel the reſpondent, and perhaps to perplex the moderator a little too, he is ſoon tempted to ſuppoſe his argument unanſwerable, and the truth entirely to lie on his ſide. The pleaſure which he takes in having found a ſophiſm which has great appearance of reaſon, and which he himſelf has managed with ſuch ſucceſs, becomes perhaps a ſtrong prejudice to engage his inward ſentiments in favour of his argument, and in oppoſition to the ſuppoſed truth.

XIX. Yet perhaps it may be poſſible to reduce ſcholaſtic diſputations under ſuch a guard, as may in ſome meaſure prevent moſt of theſe abuſes of them, and the unhappy events that too often attend them; for it is pity that an exerciſe which has ſome valuable benefits attending it, ſhould be utterly thrown away, if it be poſſible to ſecure young minds againſt the abuſe of it; for which purpoſe ſome of theſe directions may ſeem proper.

XX. GENERAL directions for ſcholaſtic diſputes.

1. Never diſpute upon mere trifles, things that are utterly uſeleſs to be known, under a vain pretence of ſharpening the wit; for the ſame advantage may be derived from ſolid and uſeful ſubjects, and thus two happy ends may be attained at once. Or if ſuch diſputations are always thought dangerous in important matters, let them be utterly abandoned.

2. Do not make infinite and unſearchable things the matter of diſpute, nor ſuch propoſitions as are made up of mere words without ideas, leſt it lead young perſons into a moſt unhappy habit of talking without a meaning, and boldly of determining upon things that are hardly within the reach of human capacity.

3. Let not obvious and known truths, or ſome of the moſt plain and certain propoſitions be bandied about in a diſputation, for a mere trial of ſkill; for he that oppoſes them in this manner will be in danger of contracting a habit of oppoſing all evidence, will acquire a ſpirit of contradiction, and pride himſelf in a power of reſiſting the brighteſt light, and fighting againſt the ſtrongeſt proofs; this will inſenſibly injure the mind, and tends greatly to an univerſal ſcepticiſm.

Upon the whole, therefore, the moſt proper ſubjects of diſpute ſeem to be, thoſe queſtions which are not of the very higheſt importance and certainty, nor of the meaneſt and trifling kind; but rather the intermediate queſtions between theſe two; and there is a large ſufficiency of them in the ſciences. But this I put as a mere propoſal, to be determined by the more learned and prudent.

4. It would be well if every diſpute could be ſo ordered as to be a mean of ſearching out truth, and not to gain a triumph. Then each diſputant might come to work without bias and prejudice, with a deſire of truth, and not with ambition of glory and victory.

Nor ſhould the aim and deſign of the reſpondent be to avoid artfully and eſcape the difficulties which the opponent offers, but to diſcuſs them thoroughly, and ſolve them fairly, if they are capable of being ſolved.

Again, let the opponent be ſolicitous not to darken and confound the reſponſes that are given him by freſh ſubtilties; but let him bethink himſelf whether they are not a juſt anſwer to the objection, and be honeſtly ready to perceive and accept them, and yield to them.

5. For this end, let both the reſpondent and opponent uſe the cleareſt and moſt diſtinct and expreſſive language in which they can clothe thoughts. Let them ſeek and practiſe brevity and perſpicuity on both ſides, without long declamations, tedious circumlocutions, and rhetorical flouriſhes.

If there happen to be any doubt or obſcurity on either ſide, let neither the one nor the otherever refuſe to give a fair explication of the words they uſe.

6. They ſhould not indulge ridicule, either of perſons or things in their diſputations. They ſhould abſtain from all banter and jeſt, laughter and meriment. Theſe are things that break in upon that philoſophical gravity, ſedateneſs, and ſerenity of temper which ought to be obſerved in every ſearch after truth. However, an argument on ſome ſubjects may be ſometimes clothed with a little pleaſantry, yet a jeſt or witticiſm ſhould never be uſed inſtead of an argument, nor ſhould it ever be ſuffered to paſs for a real and ſolid proof.

But eſpecially if the ſubject be ſacred or divine, and have nothing in it comical or ridiculous, all ludicrous turns, and jocoſe or comical airs, ſhould be entirely excluded, leſt young minds become tinctured with a ſilly and profane ſort of ridicule, and learn to jeſt and trifle with the awful ſolemnities of religion.

7. Nor ſhould ſarcaſm and reproach, or inſolent language, ever be uſed among fair diſputants. Turn not off from things to ſpeak of perſons. Leave all noiſy conteſts, all immodeſt clamours, brawling language, and eſpecially all perſonal ſcandal and ſcurrility to the meaneſt part of the vulgar world. Let your manner be all candour and gentleneſs, patient and ready to hear, humbly zealous to inform and be informed; you ſhould be free and pleaſant in every anſwer and behaviour, rather like well bred gentlemen in polite converſation, than like noiſy and contentious wranglers.

8. If the opponent ſees victory to incline to his ſide, let him be content to ſhow the force of his argument to the intelligent part of the company, without too importunate and

petulant demands of an anſwer, and without inſulting over his antagoniſt, or putting the modeſty of the reſpondent to the bluſh. Nor let the reſpondent triumph over the opponent, when he is ſilent and replies no more. On which ſide ſoever victory declares herſelf, let neither of them manage with ſuch unpleaſing and inſolent airs, as to awaken thoſe evil paſſions of pride, anger, ſhame, or reſentment on either ſide, which alienate the mind from truth, render it obſtinate in the defence of errour, and never ſuffer it to part with any of its old opinions.

In ſhort, when truth evidently appears on either ſide, let them learn to yield to conviction. When either party is at a non plus, let them confeſs the difficulty, and deſire preſent aſſiſtance, or further time and retirement to conſider of the matter, and not to rack their preſent invention to find out little ſhifts to avoid the force and evidence of truth.

9. Might it not be a ſafer practice, in order to attain the beſt ends of diſputation, and to avoid ſome of the ill effects of it, if the opponents were ſometimes engaged on the ſide of truth, and produced their arguments in oppoſition to errour? And what if the reſpondent was appointed to ſupport the errour, and defend it as well as he could, till he was forced to yield at leaſt to thoſe arguments of the opponents, which appear to be really juſt, and ſtrong, and unanſwerable?

In this practice, the theſis of the reſpondent ſhould only be a fair ſtating of the queſtion, with ſome of the chief objections againſt the truth propoſed and ſolved.

Perhaps this practice might not be ſo eaſily perverted and abuſed to raiſe a cavilling, diſputative, and ſceptical temper in the minds of youth.

I confeſs, in this method which I now propoſe, there would be one among the ſtudents, viz. the reſpondent, always engaged in the ſupport of ſuppoſed errour; but all the reſt would be exerciſing their talents in arguing for the ſuppoſed truth; whereas in common methods of diſputation in the ſchools, eſpecially where the ſtudents are numerous, each ſingle ſtudent is perpetually employed to oppoſe the truth and vindicate errour, except once in a long time, when it comes to his turn to be reſpondent.

10. Upon the whole, it ſeems neceſſary that theſe methods of diſputation ſhould be learnt in the ſchools, in order to teach ſtudents better to defend truth, and to refute errour,

both in writing and converſation, where the ſcholaſtic forms are utterly neglected.

But after all, the advantage which youth may gain by diſputations depends much on the *tutor* or *moderator* ; he ſhould manage with ſuch prudence both in the diſputation and at the end of it, as to make all the diſputants know the very point of controverſy wherein it conſiſts ; he ſhould manifeſt the fallacy of ſophiſtical objections, and confirm the ſolid arguments and anſwers. This might teach ſtudents how to make the art of diſputation uſeful for the ſearching out the truth and the defence of it, that it may not be learnt and practiſed only as an art of wrangling, which reigned in the ſchools ſeveral hundred years, and diveſted the growing reaſon of youth of its beſt hopes and improvements.

CHAP. XIV.

Of Study, or Meditation.

I

IT has been proved and eſtabliſhed in ſome of the foregoing chapters, that neither our own obſervations, nor our reading the labours of the learned, nor the attendance on the beſt lectures of inſtruction, nor enjoying the brighteſt converſation, can ever make a man truely knowing and wiſe, without the labours of his own reaſon in ſurveying, examining, and judging concerning all ſubjects upon the beſt evidence he can acquire. A good genius, or ſagacity of thought; a happy judgment, a capacious memory, and large opportunities of obſervation and converſe, will do much of themſelves towards the cultivation of the mind, where they are well improved ; but where, to the advantages of learned lectures, living inſtructions, and well choſen books, diligence and ſtudy are ſuperadded, this man has all human aids concurring, to raiſe him to a ſuperiour degree of wiſdom and knowledge.

Under preceding heads of diſcourſe, it has been already declared, how our own meditation and reflection ſhould examine, cultivate and improve all other methods and advantages

tages of enriching the underſtanding. What remains in this chapter is, to give ſome further occaſional hints how to employ our own thoughts, what ſort of ſubjects we ſhould meditate on, and in what manner we ſhould regulate our ſtudies, and how we may improve our judgment, ſo as, in the moſt effectual and compendious way, to attain ſuch knowledge as may be moſt uſeful for every man in his circumſtances of life, and particularly for thoſe of the learned profeſſions.

II. The firſt direction for youth is this; learn betimes to diſtinguiſh between words and things. Get clear and plain ideas of the things you are ſet to ſtudy. Do not content yourſelves with mere words and names, leſt your laboured improvements only amaſs a heap of unintelligible phraſes, and you feed upon huſks inſtead of kernels. This rule is of unknown uſe in every ſcience.

But the greateſt and moſt common danger is in the ſacred ſcience of theology, where ſettled terms and phraſes have been pronounced divine and orthodox, which yet have had no meaning in them. The ſcholaſtic divinity would furniſh us with numerous inſtances of this folly. Yet for many ages all truth and all hereſy have been determined by ſuch ſenſeleſs teſts, and by words without ideas; ſuch *Shibboleths* as theſe have decided the ſecular fates of men; and biſhopricks, or burning mitres or faggots, have been the rewards of different perſons, according as they pronounced theſe conſecrated ſyllables, or not pronounced them. To defend them was all piety, pomp, and triumph. To deſpiſe them, to doubt or deny them, was torture or death. A thouſand thank offerings are due to that Providence which has delivered our age and our nation from theſe abſurd iniquities. O that every ſpecimen and ſhadow of this madneſs were baniſhed from our ſchools and churches in every ſhape!

III. Let not young ſtudents apply themſelves to ſearch out deep, dark, and abſtruſe matters, far above their reach, or ſpend their labour in any peculiar ſubjects, for which they have not the advantages of neceſſary antecedent learning, or books, or converſation. Let them not be too haſty to know things above their preſent powers, nor plunge their inquiries at once into the depths of knowledge, nor begin to ſtudy any ſcience in the middle of it; for this will confound rather than enlighten the underſtanding. Such practices may happen to diſcourage and jade the mind by an attempt above its power, it may balk the underſtanding, and create an averſion to future diligence, and perhaps by deſpair may forbid the purſuit of that ſubject ever afterwards; as a limb overſtrained by lifting a weight above its power, may never recover its former agility and vigour; or if it does, the man may be frighted from ever exerting his ſtrength again.

IV. Nor yet let any ſtudent, on the other hand, fright himſelf at every turn with unſurmountable difficulties, nor imagine that the truth is wrapt up in impenetrable darkneſs. Theſe are formidable ſpectres which the underſtanding raiſes ſometimes to flatter its own lazineſs. Thoſe things which, in a remote and confuſed view, ſeem very obſcure and perplexed, may be approached by gentle and regular ſteps, and may then unfold and explain themſelves at large to the eye. The hardeſt problems in geometry, and the moſt intricate ſchemes or diagrams, may be explicated and underſtood ſtep by ſtep. Every great mathematician bears a conſtant witneſs to this obſervation.

V. In learning any new thing, there ſhould be as little as poſſible firſt propoſed to the mind at once, and that being underſtood and fully maſtered, proceed then to the next adjoining part yet unknown. This is a ſlow, but ſafe and ſure way to arrive at knowledge. If the mind apply itſelf at firſt to eaſier ſubjects, and to things near akin to what is already known, and then advance to the more remote and knotty parts of knowledge by ſlow degrees, it will be able in this manner to cope with great difficulties, and prevail over them with amazing and happy ſucceſs.

Mathon happened to dip into the two laſt chapters of a book of geometry and menſurations, as ſoon as he ſaw it; and was frighted with the complicated diagrams which he found there, about the fruſtums of cones and pyramids, and ſome deep demonſtrations among conic ſections. He ſhut the book again in deſpair, and imagined none but Sir Isaac Newton was ever fit to read it. But his tutor happily perſuaded him to begin the firſt pages about lines and angles; and he found ſuch ſurpriſing pleaſure in three weeks time, in the victories he daily obtained, that at laſt he became one of the chief geometers of the age.

VI. Engage not the mind in the intenſe purſuit of too many things at once; eſpecially ſuch as have no relation to each other. This will be ready to diſtract the underſtanding, and hinder it from attaining perfection in any one ſubject of ſtudy. Such a practice gives a ſlight ſmattering of ſeveral ſciences, without any ſolid and ſubſtantial knowledge of them, and without any real or valuable improvement; and though two or three ſorts of ſtudy may be uſefully carried on at once, to entertain the mind with variety, that it may not be overtired with one ſort of thoughts; yet a multitude of ſubjects will too much diſtract the attention, and weaken the application of the mind to any one of them.

Where two or three ſciences are purſued at the ſame time, if one of them be dry, abſtracted, and unpleaſant; as logic, metaphyſics, law, languages, let another be more entertaining and agreeable, to ſecure the mind from wearineſs and averſion to ſtudy. Delight ſhould be mingled with labour as far as poſſible, to allure us to bear the fatigue of dry ſtudies the better. Poetry, practical mathematics, hiſtory, &c. are generally eſteemed entertaining ſtudies, and may be happily uſed for this purpoſe. Thus while we relieve a dull and heavy hour by ſome alluring employments of the mind, our very diverſions enrich our underſtandings, and our pleaſure is turned into profit.

VII. In the purſuit of every valuable ſubject of knowledge keep the end always in your eye, and be not diverted from it by every pretty trifle you meet with in the way. Some perſons have ſuch a wandering genius, that they are ready to purſue every incidental theme or occaſional idea, until they have loſt ſight of their original ſubject. Theſe are the men who, when they are engaged in converſation, prolong their ſtory by dwelling on every incident, and ſwell their narrative with long parentheſes, till they have loſt their firſt deſign; like a man who is ſent in queſt of ſome great treaſure, but he ſteps aſide to gather every flower he finds, or ſtands ſtill to dig up every ſhining pebble he meets with in his way, till the treaſure is forgotten and never found.

VIII. Exert your care, ſkill, and diligence about every ſubject, and about every queſtion, in a juſt proportion to the importance of it, together with the danger and bad conſequences of ignorance or errour therein. Many excellent advantages flow from this one direction.

1. This rule will teach you to be very careful in gaining ſome general and fundamental truths both in philoſophy, in religion, and in human life; becauſe they are of the higheſt

moment, and conduct our thoughts with eaſe into a thouſand inferiour and particular propoſitions. Such is that great principle in natural philoſophy, the doctrine of gravitation, or mutual tendency of all bodies towards each other, which Sir ISAAC NEWTON has ſo well eſtabliſhed, and from which he has drawn the ſolution of a multitude of appearances in the heavenly bodies as well as on earth.

Such is that golden principle of morality which our bleſſed Lord has given us ----'Do that to others which you think juſt and reaſonable that others ſhould do to you, which is almoſt ſufficient in itſelf to ſolve all caſes of conſcience which relate to our neighbour.

Such are thoſe principles in religion, that a rational creature is accountable to his Maker for all his actions; that the ſoul of man is immortal; that there is a future ſtate of happineſs and miſery depending on our behaviour in the preſent life, on which all our religious practices are built or ſupported.

We ſhould be very curious in examining all propoſitions that pretend to this honour of being general principles; and we ſhould not without juſt evidence admit into this rank mere matters of common fame, or commonly received opinions; no, nor the general determinations of the learned or the eſtabliſhed articles of any church or nation, &c. for there are many learned preſumptions, many ſynodical and national miſtakes, many eſtabliſhed falſehoods, as well as many vulgar errours, wherein multitudes of men have followed one another for whole ages almoſt blindfold. It is of great importance for every man to be careful that theſe general principles are juſt and true; for one errour may lead us into thouſands, which will naturally follow, if once a leading falſehood be admitted.

2. This rule will direct us to be more careful about practical points than mere ſpeculations; ſince they are commonly of much greater uſe and conſequence; therefore ſpeculations of algebra, the doctrine of infinities, and the quadrature of curves in mathematical learning, together with all the train of theorems in natural philoſophy, ſhould by no means intrench upon our ſtudies of morality and virtue. Even in the ſcience of divinity itſelf, the ſublimeſt ſpeculations of it are not of that worth and value, as rules of duty towards God and towards men.

3. In matters of practice we ſhould be moſt careful to fix our end right, and wiſely determine the ſcope at which we aim; becauſe that is to direct us in the choice and uſe of all the means to attain it. If our end be wrong, all our labour in the means will be vain, or perhaps ſo much the more pernicious as they are better ſuited to attain that miſtaken end. If mere ſenſible pleaſure, or human grandeur or wealth, be our chief end, we ſhall chuſe means contrary to piety and virtue, and proceed apace towards real miſery.

4. This rule will engage our beſt powers and deepeſt attention in the affairs of religion, and in things that relate to a future world; for thoſe propoſitions which extend only to the intereſt of the preſent life, are but of ſmall importance when compared with thoſe that have influence upon our everlaſting concernments.

5. Even in the affairs of religion, if we walk by the conduct of this rule, we ſhall be much more laborious in our inquiries into the neceſſary and fundamental articles of faith and practice than the leſſer appendices of chriſtianity. The great doctrines of repentance towards God, faith in our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, with love to men, and univerſal holineſs, will employ our beſt and brighteſt hours and meditations; while the mint, aniſe, and cummin, the jeſtures, the veſtures, and the fringes of religion, will be regarded no further than they have a plain and evident connexion with faith and love, with holineſs and peace.

6. This rule will make us ſolicitous not only to avoid ſuch errours, whoſe influence will ſpread wide into the whole ſcheme of our own knowledge and practice, but ſuch miſtakes alſo whoſe influence would be yet more extenſive and injurious to others, as well as to ourſelves; perhaps to many perſons or many families, to a whole church, a town, a country, or a kingdom. On this account, perſons who are called to inſtruct others, who are raiſed to any eminence either in church or ſtate, ought to be careful in ſettling their principles in matters relating to the civil, the moral, or the religious life, leſt a miſtake of their's ſhould diffuſe wide miſchief, draw along with it moſt pernicious conſequences, and perhaps extend to following generations.

Theſe are ſome of the advantages which ariſe from the eighth rule, viz. Purſue every inquiry and ſtudy in proportion to its real value and importance.

IX. Have a care leſt ſome beloved notion, or ſome darling ſcience, ſo far prevail over your mind, as to give a ſovereign tincture to all your other ſtudies, and diſcolour all your ideas; like a perſon in the jaundice, who ſpreads a yellow ſcene with his eyes over all the objects which he meets. I have known a man of peculiar ſkill in muſic and much devoted to that ſcience, who found out a great reſemblance of the Athenian doctrine of the Trinity in every ſingle note; and he thought it carried ſomething of argument in it to prove that doctrine. I have read another, who accommodated the ſeven days of the firſt week of creation to the ſeven notes of muſic and thus the whole creation became harmonious.

Under this influence, derived from mathematical ſtudies, ſome have been tempted to caſt all their logical, their metaphyſical, their theological, and their moral learning into the method of mathematicians, and bring every thing relating to thoſe abſtracted, or to thoſe practical ſciences, under theorems, problems, poſtulates, ſcholiums, corollaries &c. whereas the matter ought always to direct the method; for all ſubjects or matters of thought cannot be moulded or ſubdued to one form. Neither the rules for the conduct of the underſtanding nor the doctrines nor the duties of religion and virtue, can be exhibited naturally in figures and diagrams. Things are to be conſidered as they are in themſelves; their natures are inflexible, and their natural relations unalterable; and therefore in order to conceive them aright, we muſt bring our underſtandings to things, and not pretend to bend and ſtrain things to comport with our fancies and forms.

X. Suffer not any beloved ſtudy to prejudice your mind ſo far in favour of it as to deſpiſe all other learning. This is a fault of ſome little ſouls, who have gained a ſmattering of aſtronomy, chimiſtry, metaphyſics, hiſtory, &c. and for want of a due acquaintance with other ſciences, make a ſcoff at them all in compariſon of their favorite ſcience. Their underſtandings are hereby cooped up in narrow bounds, ſo that they never look abroad into other provinces of the intellectual world, which are more beautiful perhaps and more fruitful than their own. If they would ſearch a little into other ſciences, they might not only find treaſures of new knowledge, but might be furniſhed alſo with rich hints of thought, and glorious aſſiſtance to cultivate that very province to which they have confined themſelves.

Here I would always give ſome grains of allowance to the ſacred ſcience of theology, which is incomparably ſuperiour to all the reſt, as it teaches us the knowledge of God, and the way to his eternal favour. This is that noble ſtudy which is every man's duty, and every one who can be called a rational creature is capable of it. This is that ſcience which would truly enlarge the minds of men, were it ſtudied with that freedom, that unbiaſſed love of truth, and that ſacred charity which it teaches; and if it were not made, contrary to its own nature, the occaſion of ſtrife, faction, malignity, a narrow ſpirit, and unreaſonable impoſitions on the mind and practice. Let this therefore ſtands always chief.

XI. Let every particular ſtudy have due and proper time aſſigned it, and let not a favourite ſcience prevail with you to lay out ſuch hours upon it, as ought to be employed on the more neceſſary and more important affairs or ſtudies of your profeſſion. When you have, according to the beſt of your diſcretion, and according to the circumſtances of your life, fixed proper hours for particular ſtudies, endeavour to keep to thoſe rules; not indeed with a ſuperſtitious preciſeneſs, but with ſome good degrees of regular conſtancy. Order and method in a courſe of ſtudy ſaves time, and makes large improvements. Such a fixation of certain hours will have a happy influence to ſecure you from trifling and waſting away your minutes in impertinence.

XII. Do not apply yourſelf to any one ſtudy at one time longer than the mind is capable of giving cloſe attention to it without wearineſs or wandering. Do not over fatigue the ſpirits at any time, leſt the mind be ſeized with a laſſitude, and thereby be tempted to nauſeate and grow tired of a particular ſubject before you have finiſhed it.

XIII. In the beginning of your application to any new ſubject, be not too uneaſy under preſent difficulties that occur, nor too importunate and impatient for anſwers and ſolutions to any queſtions that ariſe. Perhaps a little more ſtudy, a little further acquaintance with the ſubject, a little time and experience, will ſolve thoſe difficulties, untie the knot, and make your doubts vaniſh; eſpecially if you are under the inſtruction of a tutor, he can readily inform you that your inquires are perhaps too early, and that you have not yet learnt thoſe principles upon which the ſolution of ſuch a difficulty depends.

XIV. Do not expect to arrive at certainty in every ſubject which you purſue. There are a hundred things wherein we mortals in this dark and imperfect ſtate muſt be content with probability, where our beſt light and reaſonings will reach no further. We muſt balance arguments as juſtly as we can, and where we cannot find weight enough on either ſide to determine the ſcale with ſovereign force and aſſurance, we muſt content ourſelves perhaps with a ſmall preponderation. This will give us a probable opinion, and thoſe probabilities are ſufficient for the daily determination of a thouſand actions in human life, and many times even in matters of religion.

It is admirably well expreſſed by a late writer, 'When there is great ſtrength of argument ſet before us, if we will refuſe to do what appears moſt fit for us, until every little objection is removed, we ſhall never take one wiſe reſolution as long as we live.'

Suppoſe I had been honeſtly and long ſearching what religion we ſhould chuſe, and yet I could not find that the arguments in defence of Chriſtianity aroſe to complete certainty, but went only ſo far as to give me a probable evidence of the truth of it; though many difficulties ſtill remained, yet I ſhould think myſelf obliged to receive and practiſe that religion; for the God of nature and reaſon has bound us to aſſent and act according to the beſt evidence we have, even though it be not abſolute and complete; and as he is our ſupreme Judge, his abounding goodneſs and equity will approve and acquit the man whoſe conſcience honeſtly and willingly ſeeks the beſt light, and obeys it as far as he can diſcover it.

But in matters of great importance in religion, let him join all due diligence with earneſt and humble prayer for divine aid in his inquiries; ſuch prayer and ſuch deligence as eternal concerns require, and ſuch as he may plead with courage before the Judge of all.

XV. Endeavour to apply every ſpeculative ſtudy, as far as poſſible, to ſome practical uſe, that both yourſelf and others may be the better for it. Inquiries even in natural philoſophy ſhould not be mere amuſements, and much leſs in the affairs of religion. Reſearches into the ſprings of natural bodies and their motions ſhould lead men to invent happy methods for the eaſe and convenience of human life; or at leaſt they ſhould be improved to awaken us to admire the wondrous wiſdom and contrivance of God our Creator in all the works of nature.

If we purſue mathematical ſpeculations, they will inure us to attend cloſely to any ſubject, to ſeek and gain clear ideas, to diſtinguiſh truth from falſehood, to judge juſtly, and to argue ſtrongly; and theſe ſtudies do more directly furniſh us with all the various rules of thoſe uſeful arts of life, viz. meaſuring, building, ſailing, &c.

Even our very inquiries and diſputations about vacuum or ſpace, and atoms, about incommenſurable quantities, and the infinite diviſibility of matter, and eternal duration, which ſeem to be purely ſpeculative, will ſhew us ſome good practical leſſons, will lead us to ſee the weakneſs of our nature, and ſhould teach us humility in arguing upon divine ſubjects and matters of ſacred revelation. This ſhould guard us againſt rejecting any doctrine which is expreſsly and evidently revealed, though we cannot fully underſtand it. It is good ſometimes to loſe and bewilder ourſelves in ſuch ſtudies for this very reaſon, and to attain this practical advantage, this improvement in true modeſty of ſpirit.

XVI. THOUGH we ſhould always be ready to change our ſentiments of things upon juſt conviction of their falſehood, yet there is not the ſame neceſſity of changing our accuſtomed methods of reading or ſtudy and practice, even though we have not been led at firſt into the happieſt method. Our thoughts may be true, though we may have hit upon an improper order of thinking. Truth does not always depend upon the moſt convenient method. There may be a certain form and order in which we have long accuſtomed ourſelves to range our ideas and notions, which may be beſt for us now, though it was not originally beſt in itſelf. The inconveniences of changing may be much greater than the conveniences we could obtain by a new method.

As for inſtance; If a man in his younger days has ranged all his ſentiments in theology in the method of AMES's *Medulla Theologiæ*, or Biſhop USHER's *Body of Divinity*, it may be much more natural and eaſy for him to continue to diſpoſe all his further acquirements in the ſame order, though perhaps neither of theſe treatiſes are in themſelves written in the moſt perfect method. So when we have long fixed our caſes of ſhelves in a library, and ranged our books in any particular order, viz. according to their languages, or according to their ſubjects, or according to the alphabetical names of the authors, &c. we are perfectly well acquainted with the order in which they now ſtand, and we can find any particular book which we ſeek, or add a new book which we have purchaſed, with much greater eaſe than we do in finer caſes of ſhelves where the books were ranged in any different manner whatſoever; any different poſition of the volumes would be new and ſtrange, and troubleſome to us, and would not countervail the inconveniences of a change.

So if a man of forty years old has been taught to hold his pen awkwardly in his youth, and yet writes ſufficiently well for all the purpoſes of his ſtation, it is not worth while to teach him now the moſt accurate methods of handling that inſtrument; for this would create him more trouble without equal advantage, and perhaps he might never attain to write better after he has placed all his fingers perfectly right with this new accuracy.

CHAP. XI.

Of fixing the Attention.

A STUDENT ſhould labour, by all proper methods to acquire a ſteady fixation of thought. Attention is a very neceſſary thing in order to improve our minds. The evidence of truth does not always appear immediately nor ſtrike the ſoul at firſt ſight. It is by long attention and inſpection that we arrive at evidence, and it is for want of it that we judge falſely of many things. We make haſte to determine upon a ſlight and ſudden view, we confirm our gueſſes which ariſe from a glance, we paſs a judgment while we have but a confuſed or obſcure perception, and thus plunge ourſelves into miſtakes. This is like a man, who, walking in a miſt, or being at a great diſtance from any viſible objects, ſuppoſe a tree, a man, a horſe, or a church, judges much amiſs of the figure, ſituation, and colours of it, and ſometimes takes one for the other; whereas, if he would but withhold his judgment until he come nearer to it, or ſtay till clearer light comes, and then would fix his eyes longer upon it, he would ſecure himſelf from thoſe miſtakes.

Now, in order to gain a greater facility of attention, we may obſerve theſe rules.

I. GET a good liking to the ſtudy or knowledge you would purſue. We may obſerve that there is not much difficulty in confining the mind to contemplate what we have a great deſire to know; and eſpecially if they are matters of ſenſe or ideas which paint themſelves upon the fancy. It is but acquiring a hearty good will and reſolution to ſearch out and ſurvey the various properties and parts of ſuch objects, and our attention will be engaged if there be any delight or diverſion in the ſtudy or contemplation of them. Therefore mathematical ſtudies have a ſtrange influence towards fixing the attention of the mind, and giving a ſteadineſs to a wandering diſpoſition, becauſe they deal much in lines, figures, and numbers, which affect and pleaſe the ſenſe and imagination. Hiſtories have a ſtrong tendency the ſame way, for they engage the ſoul by a variety of ſenſible occurrences; when it has began it knows not how to leave off; it longs through a natural curioſity belonging to mankind, to know the final event. Voyages and travels, and accounts of ſtrange countries, and ſtrange appearances, will aſſiſt in this work. This ſort of ſtudy detains the mind by the perpetual occurrence and expectation of ſomething new, and of that which may gratefully ſtrike the imagination.

II. SOMETIMES we may make uſe of ſenſible things and corporeal images for the illuſtration of thoſe notions which are more abſtracted and intellectual. Therefore diagrams greatly aſſiſt the mind in aſtronomy and philoſophy; and the emblems of virtues and vices may happily teach children, and pleaſingly impreſs thoſe uſeful moral ideas on young minds, which perhaps might be conveyed to them with much more difficulty by mere moral and abſtracted diſcourſes.

I CONFESS in this practice of repreſenting moral ſubjects by pictures, we ſhould be cautious leſt we ſo far immerſe the mind in corporeal images, as to render it unfit to take in an abſtracted or intellectual idea, or cauſe it to form wrong conceptions of immaterial things. This practice therefore is rather to be uſed at firſt in order to get a fixed habit of attention, and in ſome caſes only; but it can never be a conſtant way and method of purſuing all moral, abſtracted, and ſpiritual themes.

III. APPLY yourſelf to thoſe ſtudies, and read thoſe authors, who draw out their ſubjects in a perpetual chain of connected reaſonings, wherein the following parts of the diſcourſe are naturally derived from thoſe which go before. Several of the mathematical ſciences, if not all, are happily uſeful for this purpoſe. This will render the labour of ſtudy delightful to a rational mind, and will fix the powers of the underſtanding with ſtrong attention to their proper oppoſition by the very pleaſure of it. *Labor ipſe voluptas* is a happy propoſition wherever it can be applied.

IV. Do not chuſe your conſtant place of ſtudy by the finery of the proſpects, nor by the moſt various and entertaining ſcenes of ſenſible things. Too much light, or a variety of objects which ſtrike the eye or the ear eſpecially, while they are ever in motion, or often changing, have a natural and powerful tendency to ſteal away the mind too often from its ſteady purſuit of any ſubject which we contemplate; and thereby the ſoul gets a habit of ſilly curioſity, and impertinence of trifling and wandering. VAGARIO thought himſelf furniſhed with the beſt cloſet for his ſtudy among the beauties, gaieties, and diverſions of *Kenſington* or *Hampton court*; but, after ſeven years profeſſing to purſue learning, he was a mere novice ſtill.

BE not in too much haſte to come to the determination of a difficult or important point. Think it worth your waiting to find out truth. Do not give your aſſent to either ſide of the queſtion too ſoon, merely on this account, that the ſtudy of it is long and difficult. Rather be content with ignorance for a ſeaſon, and continue in ſuſpence 'till your attention and meditation and labour have found out ſufficient evidence on one ſide. Some are ſo fond to know a great deal at once, and love to talk of things with freedom and boldneſs before they thoroughly underſtand them, that they ſcarce ever allow themſelves attention enough to ſearch the matter through and through.

VI. HAVE a care of indulging the more ſenſual paſſions and appetites of animal nature: They are great enemies to attention. Let not the mind of a ſtudent be under the influence of any warm affection to things of ſenſe, when he comes to engage in the ſearch of truth, or the improvement of his underſtanding. A perſon under the power of love,x or fear, or anger, great pain or deep ſorrow, hath ſo little government of

his

x And let th'aspiring youth beware of love, &c.

Thomson

his ſoul, that he cannot keep it attentive to the proper ſubject of his meditation. The paſſions call away the thoughts with inceſſant importunity towards the object that excited them; and if we indulge the frequent riſe and roving of paſſions, we ſhall thereby procure an unſteady and unattentive habit of mind.

Yet this one exception muſt be admitted, viz. If we can be ſo happy as to engage any paſſion of the ſoul on the ſide of the particular ſtudy which we are perſuing, it may have a good influence to fix the attention more ſtrongly to it.

VII. It is therefore very uſeful to fix and engage the mind in the purſuit of any ſtudy by a conſideration of the divine pleaſures of truth and knowledge, by a ſenſe of our duty to God, by a delight in the exerciſe of our intellectual faculties, by the hope of future ſervice to our fellow creatures, and glorious advantage to ourſelves, both in this world and that which is to come. Theſe thoughts, though they move our affections yet they do it with a proper influence; theſe will rather aſſiſt and promote our attention, than diſturb or divert it from the ſubject of our preſent and proper meditations. A ſoul inſpired with the fondeſt love of truth, and the warmeſt aſpirations after ſincere felicity and celeſtial beatitude, will keep all its powers attentive to the inceſſant purſuit of them; paſſion is then refined and conſecrated to its divineſt purpoſes.

CHAP. XVI.

Of enlarging the Capacity of the Mind.

THERE are three things which in an eſpecial manner go to make up that amplitude or capacity of mind, which is one of the nobleſt characters belonging to the underſtanding. 1. When the mind is ready to take in great and ſublime ideas without pain or difficulty. 2. When the mind is free to receive new and ſtrange ideas, upon juſt evidence, without great ſurpriſe or averſion. 3. When the mind is able to conceive or ſurvey many ideas at once without confuſion, and to form a true judgment derived from that extenſive ſurvey.

The perſon who wants either of theſe characters may in that reſpect be ſaid to have a narrow genius. Let us diffuſe our meditations a little upon this ſubject.

I. That is an ample and capacious mind which is ready to take in vaſt and ſublime ideas without pain or difficulty. Perſons who have never been uſed to converſe with any thing but the common, little, and obvious affairs of life, have acquired a narrow or contracted habit of ſoul, that they are not able to ſtretch their intellect wide enough to admit large and noble thoughts; they are ready to make their domeſtic, daily, and familiar images of things, the meaſure of all that is, and all that can be.

Talk to them of the vaſt dimenſions of the planetary worlds; tell them that the ſtar called Jupiter is a ſolid globe, two hundred and twenty times bigger than our earth; that the ſun is a vaſt globe of fire above a thouſand times bigger than Jupiter; that is, two hundred and twenty thouſand times bigger than the earth; that the diſtance from the earth to the ſun is eighty one millions of miles; and that a cannon bullet ſhot from the earth would not arrive at the neareſt of the fixed ſtars in ſome hundreds of years; they cannot bear the belief of it, but hear all theſe glorious labours of aſtronomy as a mere idle romance.

Inform them of the amazing ſwiftneſs of the motion of ſome of the ſmalleſt or the biggeſt bodies in nature; aſſure them, according to the beſt philoſophy, that the planet *Venus*, that is, our morning or evening ſtar, which is near as big as our earth, though it ſeems to move from its place but a few yards in a month, does really fly ſeventy thouſand miles in an hour; tell them that the rays of light ſhoot from the ſun to our earth at the rate of one hundred and eighty thouſand miles in the ſecond of a minute; they ſtand aghaſt at ſuch ſort of talk, and believe it no more than the tales of giants fifty yards high, and the rabbinical fables of leviathan, who every day ſwallows a fiſh of three miles long, and is thus preparing himſelf to be the food and entertainment of the bleſſed at the feaſt of Paradiſe.

Theſe unenlarged ſouls are in the ſame manner diſguſted with the wonders which the microſcope has diſcovered concerning the ſhape, the limbs, and motions of ten thouſand little animals, whoſe united bulk would not equal a pepper corn; they are ready to give the lie to all the improvements of our ſenſes by the invention of a variety of glaſſes, and will ſcarcely believe any thing beyond the teſtimony of their naked eye without the aſſiſtance of art.

Now if we would attempt in a learned manner to relieve the minds that labour under this defect,

1. It is uſeful to begin with the firſt principles of geometry, and lead them onward by degrees to the doctrine of quantities which are incommenſurable, or which will admit of no common meaſure, though it be never ſo ſmall. By this mean they will ſee the neceſſity of admitting the infinite diviſibility of quantity or matter.

This ſame doctrine may alſo be proved to their underſtandings, and almoſt to their ſenſes, by ſome eaſier arguments in a more obvious manner. As the very opening and cloſing of a pair of compaſſes will evidently prove, that if the ſmalleſt ſuppoſed part of matter or quantity be put between the points, there will be ſtill leſs and leſs diſtances or quantities all the way between the legs, till you come to the head or joint; wherefore there is no ſuch thing poſſible as the ſmalleſt quantity. But a little acquaintance with true philoſophy and mathematical learning would ſoon teach them, that there are no limits either as to the extenſion of ſpace, or to the diviſion of body, and would lead them to believe there are bodies amazingly great or ſmall beyond their preſent imagination.

2. It is proper alſo to acquaint them with the circumference of our earth, which may be proved by very eaſy principles of geometry, geography, and aſtronomy, to be about twenty four thouſand miles round, as it has been actually found to have this dimenſion by mariners who have ſailed round it. Then let them be taught, that in every twenty four hours either the ſun and ſtars muſt all move round this earth, or the earth muſt turn round upon its own axis. If the earth itſelf revolve thus, then each houſe or mountain near the equator muſt move at the rate of a thouſand miles in an hour; but if, as they generally ſuppoſe, the ſun or ſtars move round the earth, then the circumference of their ſeveral orbits or ſpheres being vaſtly greater than this earth, they muſt have a motion prodigiouſly ſwifter than a thouſand miles an hour. Such a thought as this will by degrees enlarge their minds, and they will be taught, even upon their own principle of the diurnal revolutions of the heavens, to take in ſome of the vaſt dimenſions of the heavenly bodies, their ſpaces and motions.

3. To this ſhould be added the uſe of teleſcopes, to help them to ſee the diſtant wonders in the ſkies; and microſcopes, which diſcover the minuteſt part of little animals, and reveal ſome of the finer and moſt curious works of nature. They ſhould be acquainted alſo with ſome other noble inventions of modern philoſophy. which have a great influence to enlarge the human underſtanding, of which I ſhall take occaſion to ſpeak more under the next head.

4. For the ſame purpoſe they may be invited to read thoſe parts of MILTON's admirable poem, intitled, Paradiſe Loſt, where he deſcribes the armies and powers of angels, the wars and the ſenate of devils, the creation of this earth, together with the deſcriptions of heaven, hell, and paradiſe.

It muſt be granted that poeſy often deals in theſe vaſt and ſublime ideas. And even if the ſubject or matter of the poem doth not require ſuch amazing and extenſive thoughts, yet tropes and figures, which are ſome of the main powers and beauties of poeſy, do ſo gloriouſly exalt the matter, as to give a ſublime imagination its proper reliſh and delight.

boar So when a boor is chaffed in hunting.

His noſtrils flames expire,
And his red eye balls roll with living fire.

DRYDEN.

When ULYSSES with holds and ſuppreſſes his reſentment,

His wrath compreſt
Recoiling, mutter'd thunder in his breaſt.

POPE.

But eſpecially where the ſubject is grand, the Poet fails not to repreſent it in all its grandeur.

So when the Supremacy of a God is deſcribed,

He ſees with equal eye, as God of all,
A hero periſh, or a Sparrow fall;
Atoms, or Syſtems, into ruin hurl'd,
And now a bubble burſt and now a world.

POPE.

This ſort of writings have a natural tendency to enlarge the capacity of the mind, and make ſublime ideas familiar to it. And inſtead of running always to the ancient heathen poeſy with this deſign, we may with equal, if not ſuperiour advantage apply ourſelves to converſe with ſome of the beſt of our modern poets, as well as with the writings of the prophets, and the poetical parts of the bible, viz. the book of JOB and the Pſalms, in which ſacred authors we ſhall find ſometimes more ſublime ideas, more glorious deſcriptions, more elevated language, than the fondeſt critics have ever found in any of the heathen verſifiers either of *Greece* or *Rome*; for the eaſtern writers uſe and allow much ſtronger figures and tropes than the weſtern.

Now there are many and great and ſacred advantages to be derived from this ſort of enlargement of the mind.

It will lead us into more exalted apprehenſions of the great God our creator than ever we had before. It will entertain our thoughts with holy wonder and amazement, while we contemplate that being who created theſe various works of ſurpriſing greatneſs, and ſurpriſing ſmallneſs; who has diſplayed moſt unconceivable wiſdom in the contrivance of all the parts, powers and motions of theſe little animals inviſible to the naked eye; who has manifeſted a moſt divine extent of knowledge, power and greatneſs, in forming, moving and managing the moſt extenſive bulk of the heavenly bodies, and in ſurveying and comprehending all thoſe unmeaſurable ſpaces in which they move. Fancy with all her images is fatigued and overwhelmed in following the planetary worlds through ſuch immenſe ſtages, ſuch aſtoniſhing journeys as theſe are, and reſigns its place to the pure intellect, which learns by degrees to take in ſuch ideas as theſe, and to adore its creator with new and ſublime devotion.

And not only are we taught to form juſter ideas of the great God by theſe methods, but this enlargement of the mind carries us on to nobler conceptions of his intelligent creatures. The mind that deals only in vulgar and common ideas is ready to imagine the nature and powers of man to come ſomething too near to God his maker, becauſe we do not ſee or ſenſibly converſe with any beings ſuperiour to ourſelves. But when the ſoul has obtained a greater amplitude of thought, it will not then immediately pronounce every thing to be God which is above man. It then learns to ſuppoſe there may be as many various ranks of beings in the inviſible world in a conſtant gradation ſuperiour to us, as we ourſelves are ſuperiour to all the ranks of being beneath us in this viſible world; even though we deſcend downward far below the ant and the worm, the ſnail and the oyſter, to the leaſt and to the dulleſt animated atoms which are diſcovered to us by microſcopes.

By theſe means we ſhall be able to ſuppoſe what prodigious power angels, whether good or bad, muſt be furniſhed with, and prodigious knowledge in order to over ſee the realms of *Perſia* and *Græcia* of old, or if any ſuch ſuperintend the affairs of *Great Britain*, *France*, *Ireland*, *Germany*, &c. in our days; what power and ſpeed is neceſſary to deſtroy one hundred eighty five thouſand armed men in one night in the Aſſyrian camp, of *Sennacherib*, and all the firſt born in the land of *Egypt* in another, both which are attributed to an angel.

By theſe ſteps we ſhall aſcend to form more juſt ideas of the knowledge and grandeur, the power and glory, of the man Jeſus Chriſt, who is intimately united to God, and is one with him. Doubtleſs he is furniſhed with ſuperiour powers to all the angels in heaven, becauſe he is employed in ſuperiour work, and appointed to be the ſovereign Lord of all the viſible and inviſible worlds. It is his human nature, in which the Godhead dwells bodily, that is advanced to thoſe honours, and to this empire; and perhaps there is little or nothing in the government of the kingdoms of nature, and grace, but what is tranſacted by the man Jeſus, inhabited by the divine power and wiſdom, and employed as a medium or conſcious inſtrument of this extenſive gubernation.

II. I PROCEED now to conſider the next thing wherein the capacity or amplitude of the mind conſiſts, and that is, when the mind is free to receive new and ſtrange ideas and propoſitions upon juſt evidence without any great ſurpriſe or averſion. Thoſe who confine themſelves within the circle of their own hereditary ideas and opinions, and who never give themſelves leave ſo much as to examine or believe any thing beſide the dictates of their own family, or ſect, or party, are juſtly charged with a narrowneſs of ſoul. Let us ſurvey ſome inſtances of this imperfection, and then direct to the cure of it.

1. Perſons who have been bred up all their days within the ſmoke of their father's chimney, or within the limits of their

"Nil admirari prope res est una —
Solaque quae possit facere et servare beatum, &c
[illegible]

native town or village, are ſurpriſed at every new ſight that appears, when they travel a few miles from home. The plowman ſtands amazed at the ſhops, the trade, the crowds of people, the magnificent buildings, the pomp, and riches, and equipage of the court and city, and would hardly believe what was told him before he ſaw it. On the other hand, the cockney, travelling into the country, is ſurpriſed at many actions of the quadruped and winged animals in the field, and at many common practices of rural affairs.

If either of theſe happen to hear an account of the familiar and daily cuſtoms of foreign countries, they pronounce them at once indecent and ridiculous; ſo narrow are their underſtandings, and their thoughts ſo confined, that they know not how to believe any thing wiſe or proper, beſides what they have been taught to practiſe.

This narrowneſs of mind ſhould be cured by hearing and reading the accounts of different parts of the world, and the hiſtories of paſt ages, and of nations and of countries diſtant from our own, eſpecially the more polite parts of mankind. Nothing tends in this reſpect ſo much to enlarge the mind as travelling, that is, making a viſit to other towns, cities, or countries, beſides thoſe in which we were born and educated; and where our condition of life does not grant us this privilege, we muſt endeavour to ſupply the want of it by books.

2. It is the ſame narrowneſs of mind that awakens the ſurpriſe and averſion of ſome perſons, when they hear of doctrines and ſchemes in human affairs, or in religion, quite different from what they have embraced. Perhaps they have been trained up from their infancy in one ſet of notions, and their thoughts have been confined to one ſingle tract both in the civil or religious life, without ever hearing or knowing what other opinions are current among mankind; or at leaſt they have ſeen all other notions beſides their own repreſented in a falſe and malignant light, whereupon they judge and condemn at once every ſentiment but what their own party receives, and they think it a piece of juſtice and truth to lay heavy cenſures upon the practice of every different ſect in chriſtianity or politics. They have ſo rooted themſelves in the opinions of their party, that they cannot hear an objection with patience, nor can they bear a vindication, or ſo much as an apology, for any ſet of principles beſide their own; all the reſt is nonſenſe or hereſy, folly or blaſphemy.

This defect alſo is to be relieved by free converſation with perſons of different ſentiments; this will teach us to bear with patience a defence of opinions contrary to our own. If we are ſcholars, we ſhould alſo read the objections againſt our own tenets, and view the principles of other parties, as they are repreſented in their own authors, and not merely in the citations of thoſe who would confute them. We ſhould take an honeſt and unbiaſſed ſurvey of the force of reaſoning on all ſides, and bring all to the teſt of unprejudiced reaſon and divine revelation. Note; this is not to be done in a raſh and ſelf ſufficient manner; but with a humble dependence on divine wiſdom and grace, while we walk among ſnares and dangers.

By ſuch a free converſe with perſons of different ſects, eſpecially thoſe who differ only in particular forms of chriſtianity, but agree in the great and neceſſary doctrines of it, we ſhall find that there are perſons of good ſenſe and virtue, perſons of piety and worth, perſons of much candour and goodneſs, who belong to different parties, and have imbibed ſentiments oppoſite to each other. This will ſoften the roughneſs of an unpoliſhed ſoul, and enlarge the avenues of our charity towards others, and incline us to receive them into all the degrees of unity and affection which the word of God requires.

3. I might borrow further illuſtrations both of this freedom and of this averſion to receive new truths from modern aſtronomy and natural philoſophy. How much is the vulgar part of the world ſurpriſed at the talk of the diurnal and annual revolutions of the earth! They have ever been taught by their ſenſes and by their neighbours to imagine, that the earth ſtands fixed in the centre of the univerſe, and that the ſun, with all the planets and fixed ſtars, are whirled round this little globe once in twenty four hours; not conſidering that ſuch a diurnal motion, by reaſon of the diſtance of ſome of thoſe heavenly bodies, muſt be almoſt infinitely ſwifter and more inconceivable than any which the modern aſtronomers attribute to them. Tell theſe perſons that the ſun is fixed in the centre, that the earth and all the planets roll round the ſun in their ſeveral periods, and that the moon rolls round the earth in a leſſer circle, while, together with the earth, ſhe is carried round the ſun; they cannot admit a ſyllable of this new and ſtrange doctrine, and they pronounce it utterly contrary to all ſenſe and reaſon.

Acquaint them that there are four moons alſo perpetually rolling round the planet Jupiter, and carried along with him in his periodical circuit round the ſun, which little moons were never known till the year 1610, when GALILEO diſcovered them by his teleſcope. Inform them that Saturn has five moons of the ſame kind attending him; and that the body of that planet is encompaſſed with a broad flat circular ring, diſtant from the planet twenty one thouſand miles, and twenty one thouſand miles broad, they look on theſe things as tales and mere fancies, and will tell you that the glaſſes do but delude your eyes with vain images; and even when they themſelves conſult their own eye ſight in the uſe of theſe tubes, the narrowneſs of their mind is ſuch, that they will ſcarcely believe their ſenſes, when they dictate ideas ſo new and ſtrange.

If you proceed further, and attempt to lead them into a belief, that all theſe planetary worlds are habitable, and it is probable they are repleniſhed with intellectual beings dwelling in bodies, they will deride the folly of him who informs them; for they are reſolved to believe that there are no habitable worlds but this earth, and no ſpirits dwelling in bodies beſides mankind; and it is well if they do not fix the brand of hereſy on the man who is leading them out of their long impriſonment, and looſing the fetters of their ſouls.

There are many other things relating to mechanical experiments, and to the properties of the air, water, fire, iron, the loadſtone, and other minerals and metals, as well as the doctrine of the ſenſible qualities, viz. colours, ſounds, taſtes, &c. which this rank of men cannot believe for want of a greater amplitude of mind.

The beſt way to conceive them is by giving them ſome acquaintance with the various experiments in philoſophy, and proving by occular demonſtration the multiform and amazing operations of the air pump, the loadſtone, the chemical furnace, optical glaſſes, and mechanical engines. By theſe means the underſtanding will ſtretch itſelf by degrees, and when they have found there are ſo many new and ſtrange things that are moſt evidently true, they will not be ſo forward to condemn every new propoſition in any of the other ſciences, or in the affairs of religion or civil life.

III. The capacity of the underſtanding includes yet another qualification in it, and that is an ability to receive many ideas at once without confuſion. The ample mind takes a ſurvey of ſeveral objects with one glance, keeps them all within ſight and preſent to the ſoul, that they may be compared together in their mutual reſpects; it forms juſt judgments, and it draws proper inferences from this compariſon even to a great length of argument, and a chain of demonſtrations.

The narrowneſs, that belongs to human ſouls in general, is a great imperfection and impediment to wiſdom and happineſs. There are but few perſons who can contemplate, or practiſe ſeveral things, at once. Our faculties are very limited, and while we are intent upon one part or property of a ſubject, we have but a ſlight glimpſe of the reſt, or we loſe it out of ſight. But it is a ſign of a large and capacious mind, if we can, with one ſingle view, take in a variety of objects; or at leaſt when the mind can apply itſelf to ſeveral objects with ſo ſwift a ſucceſſion, and in ſo few moments, as attains almoſt the ſame ends, as if it were all done in the ſame inſtant.

This is a neceſſary qualification in order to great knowledge and judgment; for there are ſeveral things in human life, in religion, and in the ſciences, which have various circumſtances, appendices, and religions attending them; and without a ſurvey of all theſe ideas, which ſtand in connexion with and relation to each other, we are often in danger of paſſing a falſe judgment on the ſubject propoſed. It is for this reaſon there are ſo numerous controverſies found among the learned and unlearned world, in matters of religion, as in affairs of civil government. The notions of ſin and of duty to God and to our fellow creatures; of law, juſtice, authority and power; of covenant, faith, juſtification, redemption, and grace; of church, biſhop, preſbyter, ordination, &c. contain in them ſuch complicated ideas, that, when we are to judge of any thing concerning them, it is hard to take into our view, at once, all the attendants or conſequents that muſt and will be concerned in the determination of a ſingle queſtion; and yet without a due attention to many, or moſt of theſe, we are in danger of determining that queſtion amiſs.

It is owing to the narrowneſs of our minds that we are expoſed to the ſame peril in the matters of human duty and prudence. In many things which we do, we ought not only to conſider the mere naked action itſelf, but the perſons who act, the perſons towards whom, the time when, the place where, the manner how, the end for which the action is done, together with the effects that muſt or that may follow, and all other ſurrounding circumſtances. Theſe things muſt neceſſarily be taken into view, in order to determine whether the action, which is indifferent in itſelf, be either lawful or unlawful, good or evil, wiſe or fooliſh, decent or indecent, proper or improper, as it is ſo circumſtantiated.

Let me give a plain inſtance for the illuſtration of this matter. MARIO kills a dog, which, conſidered merely in itſelf, ſeems to be an indifferent action. Now the dog was TIMON's, and not his own; this makes it look unlawful. But TIMON bid him do it; this gives an appearance of lawfulneſs again. It was done at church, and in time of divine ſervice; theſe circumſtances added caſt on it an air of irreligion. But the dog flew at MARIO, and put him in danger of his life; this relieves the ſeeming impiety of the action. Yet MARIO might have eſcaped by flying thence; therefore the action appears to be improper. But the dog was known to be mad; this further circumſtance makes it almoſt neceſſary that the dog ſhould be ſlain, leſt he might worry the aſſembly, and do much miſchief. Yet again, MARIO killed him with a piſtol, which he happened to have in his pocket ſince yeſterday's journey, and hereby the whole congregation was terrified and diſcompoſed, and divine ſervice was broken off; this carries an appearance of great indecency and impropriety in it; but after all, when we conſider a further circumſtance, that MARIO, being thus violently aſſaulted by a mad dog, had no way of eſcape, and had no other weapon about him, it ſeems to take away all the colours of impropriety, indecency, or unlawfulneſs, and to allow that the preſervation of one or many lives will juſtify the act as wiſe and good. Now all theſe concurrent appendices of the action ought to be ſurveyed, in order to pronounce with juſtice and truth concerning it.

There are a multitude of human actions in private life, in domeſtic affairs, in trafic, in civil government, in courts of juſtice, in ſchools of learning, &c. which have ſo many complicated circumſtances, aſpects, and ſituations, with regard to time and place, perſons and things, that it is impoſſible for any one to paſs a right judgment concerning them, without entering into moſt of theſe circumſtances, and ſurveying them extenſively, and comparing and balancing them all aright.

Whence by the way, I may take occaſion to ay, How many thouſands are there who take upon them to paſs their cenſures on the perſonal and domeſtic actions of others, who pronounce boldly on the affairs of the public, and determine the juſtice or madneſs, the wiſdom or folly of national adminiſtrations, of peace and war, &c. whom neither God nor men ever qualified for ſuch a poſt of judgment? They were not capable of entering into the numerous concurring ſprings of actions, nor had they ever taken a ſurvey of the twentieth part of the circumſtances which were neceſſary for ſuch judgments or cenſures.

It is the narrowneſs of our minds, as well as the vices of the will, that oftentimes prevents us from taking a full view of all the complicated and concurring appendices that belong to human actions; thence it comes to paſs that there is ſo little right judgment, ſo little juſtice, prudence, or decency, practiſed among the bulk of mankind; thence ariſe infinite reproaches and cenſures, alike fooliſh and unrighteous. You ſee therefore how needful and happy a thing it is to be poſſeſt of ſome meaſure of the amplitude of ſoul, in order to make us very wiſe, or knowing, or juſt, or prudent, or happy.

I confeſs that this ſort of amplitude or capacity of mind is in a great meaſure the gift of nature, for ſome are born with much more capacious ſouls than others.

The genius of ſome perſons is ſo poor and limited, that they can hardly take in the connexion of two or three propoſitions, unleſs it be in matters of ſenſe, and which they have learnt by experience; they are utterly unfit for ſpeculative ſtudies; it is hard for them to diſcern the difference betwixt right and wrong in matters of reaſon, on any abſtracted ſubjects; theſe ought never to ſet up for ſcholars, but apply themſelves to thoſe arts and profeſſions of life, which are to be learnt at an eaſier rate, by ſlow degrees, and daily experience.

Others have a ſoul little more capacious, and they can take in the connexion of a few propoſitions pretty well; but if the chain of conſequences be a little prolix, here they ſtick and are confounded. If perſons of this make ever devote themſelves to ſcience, they ſhould be well aſſured of a ſolid and ſtrong conſtitution of body, and well reſolved to bear the fatigue of hard labour and diligence in ſtudy; if the iron be blunt, king Solomon tells us, we muſt put more ſtrength.

But, in the third place, there are ſome of ſo bright and happy genius, and ſo ample a mind, that they can take in a long train of propoſitions, if not at once, yet in a very few moments, and judge well concerning the dependence of them. They can ſurvey a variety of complicated ideas without fatigue or diſturbance; and a number of truths offering themſelves as it were in one view to their underſtanding, doth not perplex and confound them. This makes a great man.

Now though there may be much owing to nature in this caſe, yet experience aſſures us, that even a lower degree of this capacity and extent of thought may be increaſed by diligence and application, by frequent exerciſe, and the obſervation of ſuch rules as theſe.

LABOUR by all means to gain an attentive and patient temper of mind, a power of confining and fixing your thoughts ſo long on any one appointed ſubject, till you have ſurveyed it on every ſide, and in every ſituation, and run through the ſeveral powers, parts, properties, and relations, effects, and conſequences of it. He whoſe thoughts are very fluttering and wandering, and cannot be fixed attentively to a few ideas ſucceſſively, will be able to ſurvey many and various objects diſtinctly at once, but will certainly be overwhelmed and confounded with the multiplicity of them. The rules for fixing the attention in the former chapter are proper to be conſulted here.

II. ACCUSTOM yourſelf to clear and diſtinct ideas in every thing you think of. Be not ſatisfied with obſcure and confuſed conceptions of things, eſpecially where clearer may be obtained; for one obſcure or confuſed idea, eſpecially if it be of great importance in the queſtion, intermingled with many clear ones, and placed in its variety of aſpects towards them, will be in danger of ſpreading confuſion over the whole ſcene of ideas, and thus may have an unhappy influence to overwhelm the underſtanding with darkneſs, and pervert the judgment. A little black paint will ſhamefully tincture and ſpoil twenty gay colours.

Conſider yet further, that if you content yourſelf frequently with words inſtead of ideas, or with cloudy and confuſed notions of things, how impenetrable will that darkneſs be, and how vaſt and endleſs that confuſion which muſt ſurround and involve the underſtanding, when many of theſe obſcure and confuſed ideas come to be ſet before the ſoul at once? and how impoſſible will it be to form a clear and juſt judgment about them.

III. Use all deligence to acquire and treaſure up a large ſtore of ideas and notions; take every opportunity to add ſomething to your ſtock; and by frequent recollection fix them in your memory; nothing tends to confirm and enlarge the memory like a frequent review of its poſſeſſions. Then the brain being well furniſhed with various traces, ſignatures, and images, will have a rich treaſure always ready to be propoſed or offered to the ſoul, when it directs its thought towards any particular ſubject. This will gradually give the mind a faculty of ſurveying many objects at once; as a room that is richly adorned and hung round with a great variety of pictures, ſtrikes the eye almoſt at once with all that variety, eſpecially if they have been well ſurveyed one by one at firſt; this makes it habitual and more eaſy to the inhabitants to take in many of thoſe painted ſcenes with a ſingle glance or two.

Here note, that by acquiring a rich treaſure of notions, I do not mean only ſingle ideas, but alſo propoſitions, obſervations, and experiences, with reaſonings and arguments upon the various ſubjects that occur among natural or moral, common or ſacred affairs; that when you are called to judge concerning any queſtion, you will have ſome principles of truth, ſome uſeful axioms and obſervations always ready at hand to direct and aſſiſt your judgment.

IV. It is neceſſary that we ſhould as far as poſſible entertain and lay up our daily new ideas, in a regular order, and range the acquiſitions of our ſouls under proper heads, whether of divinity, law, phyſics, mathematics, morality, politics, trade, domeſtic life, civility, decency, &c. whether of cauſe, effect, ſubſtance, mode, power, property, body, ſpirit, &c. We ſhould inure our minds to method and order continually; and when we take in any freſh ideas, occurrences, and obſervations, we ſhould diſpoſe of them in their proper places, and ſee how they ſtand and agree with the reſt of our notions on the ſame ſubject; as a ſcholar would diſpoſe of a new book on a proper ſhelf among its kindred authors; or as an officer at the poſt houſe in *London* diſpoſes of every letter he takes in, placing it in the box that belongs to the proper road or county.

In any of theſe caſes if things lay all in a heap, the addition of any new object would increaſe the confuſion; but method gives a ſpeedy and ſhort ſurvey of them with eaſe and pleaſure. Method is of admirable advantage to keep our ideas from a confuſed mixture, and to preſerve them ready for every uſe. The ſcience of ontology, which diſtributes all beings, and all the affections of being, whether abſolute or relative, under proper claſſes, is of good ſervice to keep our intellectual acquiſitions in ſuch order as that the mind may ſurvey them at once.

V. As method is neceſſary for the improvement of the mind, in order to make your treaſure of ideas moſt uſeful; ſo in all your further purſuits of truth, and acquirement of rational knowledge, obſerve a regular progreſſive method. Begin with the moſt ſimple, eaſy, and obvious ideas; then by degrees join two, and three, and more of them together. Thus the complicated ideas growing up under your eyes and obſervation, will not give the ſame confuſion of thought as they would do if they were all offered to the mind at once, without your obſerving the original and formation of them. An eminent example of this appears in the ſtudy of arithmatic. If a ſcholar juſt admitted into the ſchool obſerves his maſter performing an operation in the rule of div~~er~~iſion, his head is at once diſturbed and confounded with the manifold compariſons of the numbers of the diviſor and dividend, and the multiplication of the one and ſubtraction of it from the other; but if he begin regularly at addition, and ſo proceed by ſubtraction and multiplication, he will then in a few weeks be able to take in an intelligent ſurvey of all thoſe operations in diviſion, and to practiſe them himſelf with eaſe and pleaſure, each of which at firſt ſeemed all intricacy and confuſion.

An illuſtration of the like nature may be borrowed from geometry and algebra, and other mathematical practices. How eaſily does an expert geometrician with one glance of his eye take in a complicated diagram made up of many lines and circles, angles and arches? How readily does he judge of it, whether the demonſtration deſigned by it be true or falſe? It was by degrees he arrived at this ſtretch of underſtanding; he began with a ſingle line or point; he joined two lines in an angle; he advanced to triangles and ſquares, polygons and circles; thus the powers of his underſtanding were ſtretched and augmented daily, till by diligence and regular application he acquired this extenſive faculty of mind.

But this advantage does not belong only to mathematical learning. If we apply ourſelves at firſt in any ſcience to clear and ſingle ideas, and never hurry ourſelves on to the following and more complicated parts of knowledge till we thoroughly underſtand the foregoing, we may practiſe the ſame method of enlarging the capacity of the ſoul with ſucceſs in any one of the ſciences, or in the affairs of life and religion.

Beginning with A, B, C, and making ſyllables out of letters, and words out of ſyllables, has been the foundation of all that glorious ſuperſtructure of arts and ſciences which enriched the minds and libraries of the learned world in ſeveral ages. Theſe are the firſt ſteps by which the ample and capacious ſouls among mankind have arrived to that prodigious extent in knowledge, which renders them the wonder and glory of the nation where they live. Though Plato and Cicero, Descartes and Boyle, Locke and Sir Isaac Newton, were doubtleſs favoured by nature with a great genius and uncommon amplitude; yet in their early years and firſt attempts of ſcience, this was but limited and narrow in compariſon of what they attained at laſt. But how vaſt and capacious were thoſe powers which they afterwards acquired by patient attention and watchful obſervation, by the purſuit of clear ideas and a regular method of thinking.

VI. Another mean of acquiring this amplitude and capacity of mind is a peruſal of difficult entangled queſtions and of the ſolution of them in any ſcience. Speculative and caſuiſtical divinity will furniſh us with many ſuch caſes and controverſies. There are ſome ſuch difficulties in reconciling ſeveral parts of the epiſtles of St. Paul, relating to the Jewiſh law and to the chriſtian goſpel; a happy ſolution whereof will require ſuch an extenſive view of things, and the reading of theſe happy ſolutions will enlarge this faculty in younger ſtudents. In moral and political ſubjects, Puffendorf's Law of Nature and Nations, and ſeveral determinations therein, will promote the ſame amplitude of mind. An attendance on public trials and arguments in the civil courts of juſtice will be of good advantage for this purpoſe; and after a man has ſtudied the general principles of the law of nature and the laws of England in proper books, the reading the reports of adjudged caſes, collected by men of great ſagacity and judgment, will richly improve his mind towards acquiring this deſirable amplitude and extent of thought, and more eſpecially in perſons of that profeſſion.

CHAP. XVII.

Of improving the Memory.

MEMORY is a diſtinct faculty of the mind of man, very different from perception, judgment, reaſoning, and its other powers. Then we are ſaid to remember any thing, when the idea of it ariſes in the mind with a conſciouſneſs, at the ſame time, that we have had this idea before. Our memory is our natural power of retaining what we learn, and of recaling it on every occaſion. Therefore we can never be ſaid to remember any thing, whether it be ideas or propoſitions, words or things, notions or arguments, of which we have not had ſome former idea or perceptions either by ſenſe or imagination, thought or reflection; but whatever we learn from obſervation, books, or converſation, it muſt all be laid up and preſerved in the memory, if we would make it really uſeful.

So neceſſary and ſo excellent a faculty is the memory of man, that all other abilities of the mind borrow from hence their beauty and perfection; for other capacities of the ſoul are almoſt uſeleſs without this. To what purpoſe are all thoſe labours in knowledge and wiſdom, if we want memory to preſerve and uſe what we have acquired? What ſignify all other intellectual or ſpiritual improvements, if they are loſt as ſoon as they are obtained? It is memory alone that enriches the mind, by preſerving what our labour and induſtry daily collect. In a word, there can be neither knowledge, nor arts, nor ſciences, without memory; nor can there be any improvement of mankind in virtue or morals, or the practice of religion, without the aſſiſtance and influence of this power. Without memory the ſoul of man would be but a poor, deſtitute, naked being, with an everlaſting blank ſpread over it, excepting the fleeting ideas of the preſent moment.

Memory is very uſeful to thoſe who ſpeak, as well as to thoſe who learn. It aſſiſts the teacher and the orator, as well the ſcholar or hearer. The beſt ſpeeches and inſtructions are almoſt loſt, if thoſe who hear them immediately forget them. And thoſe who are called to ſpeak in public are much better heard and accepted, when they can deliver their diſcourſe by the help of a lively genius and a ready memory, than when they are forced to read all that they would communicate to their hearers. Reading is certainly a heavier way of the conveyance of our ſentiments ; and there are very few mere readers, who have the felicity of penetrating the ſoul, and awakening the paſſions of thoſe who hear, by ſuch a grace and power of oratory, as the man who ſeems to talk every word from his very heart, and pours out the riches of his own knowledge upon the people round about him by the help of a free and copious memory. This gives life and ſpirit to every thing that is ſpoken, and has a natural tendency to make a deeper impreſſion on the minds of men. It awakens the dulleſt ſpirits, cauſes them to receive a diſcourſe with more affection and pleaſure, and adds a ſingular grace and excellency both to the perſon and his oration.

A good judgment and a good memory are very different qualifications. A perſon may have a very ſtrong, capacious, and retentive memory, where the judgment is very poor and weak; as ſometimes it happens in thoſe who are but one degree above an idiot; who have manifeſted an amazing ſtrength and extent of memory, but have hardly been able to join or disjoin two or three ideas in a wiſe and happy manner, to make a ſolid rational propoſition.

There have been inſtances of others, who have had but a very tolerable power of memory ; yet their judgment has been of a much ſuperiour degree, juſt and wiſe, ſolid and excellent.

Yet it muſt be acknowledged, that where a happy memory is found in any perſon, there is one good foundation laid for a wiſe and juſt judgment of things, wherever the natural genius has any thing of ſagacity and brightneſs to make a right uſe of it. A good judgment muſt always, in ſome meaſure, depend on a ſurvey and compariſon of ſeveral things together in the mind, and in determining the truth of ſome doubtful propoſition by that ſurvey and compariſon. When the mind has, as it were, ſet all thoſe various objects preſent before it, which are neceſſary to form a true propoſition or judgment concerning any thing, it then determines that ſuch and ſuch ideas are to be joined or disjoined, to be affirmed or denied ; and this in a conſiſtancy and correſpondence with all thoſe other ideas or propoſitions, which any way relate or belong to the ſame ſubject. Now there can be no ſuch comprehenſive ſurvey of things, without a tolerable degree of memory. It is by viewing things paſt we learn to judge of the future ; and it happens ſometimes that if one needful or important object or idea be abſent, the judgment concerning the thing inquired will thereby become falſe or miſtaken.

You will inquire then, How comes it to paſs that there are ſome perſons, who appear in the world of buſineſs, as well as in the world of learning, to have a good judgment, and have acquired a juſt character of prudence and wiſdom, and yet have neither a very bright genius nor a ſagacity of thought, nor a very happy memory; ſo that they cannot ſet before their minds at once a large ſcene of ideas in order to paſs for a judgment.

Now we may learn from PENSEROSO ſome account of this difficulty. You ſhall ſcarcely ever find this man forward in judging and determining things propoſed to him; but he always takes time, and delays, and ſuſpends, and ponders things maturely, before he paſſes his judgment. Then he practiſes a ſlow meditation, ruminates on the ſubject, and thus perhaps in two or three nights and days rouſes and awakens thoſe ideas, one after another as he can, which are neceſſary in order to judge aright of the thing propoſed, and makes them paſs before his review in ſucceſſion. This he doth to relieve the want both of a quick ſagacity of thought and of a ready memory and ſpeedy recollection; and this caution and practice lays the foundation of his juſt judgment and wiſe conduct. He ſurveys well before he judges.

Whence I cannot but take occaſion to infer one good rule of advice to perſons of higher as well as to perſons of lower genius, and of large as well as of narrow memories, viz. That they do not too haſtily pronounce concerning matters of doubt or inquiry where there is not an urgent neceſſity of preſent action. The bright genius is ready to be ſo forward, as often betrays itſelf into great errours in judgment, ſpeech, and conduct, without a continual guard upon itſelf, and uſing the bridle of the tongue. It is by this delay and precaution, that many a perſon, of much lower natural abilities, ſhall often excel perſons, of a brighter genius in wiſdom and prudence.

It is found, that a fine genius has but a feeble memory; for where the genius is bright, and the imagination vivid, the power of memory may be too much neglected, and loſe its improvement. An active fancy readily wanders over multitude of objects, and is continually entertaining itſelf with new flying images. It runs through a number of new ſcenes or new pages with pleaſure; but without due attention, and ſeldom ſuffers itſelf to dwell long enough upon any of them to make a deep impreſſion of them on the mind, to commit them to a laſting remembrance. This is one plain reaſon, why there are ſome perſons, of very light parts and active ſpirits, who have but ſhort and narrow powers of remembrance; for, having riches of their own, they are not ſolicitous to borrow.

As ſuch a quick and various fancy and invention may be ſome hindrance to the attention and memory, ſo a mind of a good retentive ability, and which is ever crowding its memory with things which it learns and reads continually, may prevent, reſtrain, and cramp the invention itſelf. The memory of LECTORIDES is ever ready on all occaſions to offer to his mind ſomething out of other men's writings or converſations, and is preſenting him with the thoughts of other perſons perpetually. Thus the man who had naturally a good flowing invention, does not ſuffer himſelf to purſue his own thoughts. Some perſons who have been bleſt by nature with ſagacity, and no contemptible genius, have too often forbid the exerciſe of it, by tying themſelves down to the memory of the volumes they have read, and to the ſentiments of other men contained in them.

Where the memory has been almoſt conſtantly employing itſelf in gathering new acquirements, and where there has not been a judgment ſufficient to diſtinguiſh what things were fit to be recomended and treaſured up in the memory, and what things were idle, uſeleſs, or needleſs, the mind has been filled with a wretched heap and hotchpotch of words or ideas, and the ſoul may be ſaid to have had large poſſeſſions, but no true riches.

I have read, in ſome of Mr. MILTON's writings, a very beautiful ſimile, whereby he repreſents the books of the fathers, as they are called in the chriſtian church.

Whatever, ſays he, Old Time, with his huge drag net, has conveyed down to us along the ſtream of ages, whether it be ſhells or ſhell fiſh, jewels or pebbles, ſticks or ſtraws, ſeaweed or mud, theſe are the antients, theſe are the fathers. The caſe is much the ſame with the memorial poſſeſſions of the greateſt part of mankind. A few uſeful things perhaps, mixt and confounded with many trifles and all manner of rubiſh, fill up their memories and compoſe their intellectual poſſeſſions. It is a great happineſs, therefore, to diſtinguiſh things aright, and to lay up nothing in the memory but what has ſome juſt value in it, and is worthy to be numbered as a part of our treaſure.

Whatever improvements ariſe to the mind of man from the wiſe exerciſe of his own reaſoning powers, theſe may be called his own manufacture; and whatever he borrows from abroad, may be termed his foreign treaſures. Both together make a wealthy and a happy mind.

How many excellent judgments and reaſonings are framed in the mind of a man of wiſdom and ſtudy in a length of years! How many worthy and admirable notions has he been poſſeſt of in life, both by his own reaſonings, and by his prudent and laborious collections in his courſe of reading! But, alas, how many thouſands of them vaniſh away again, and are loſt in empty air, for want of a ſtronger and more retentive memory! When a young practitioner in the law was once ſaid to conteſt a point of debate with that great lawyer in the laſt age, Sergeant MAYNARD, he is reported to have anſwered him ---- 'Alas, young man! I have forgotten more law than ever thou haſt learnt or read.'

What an unknown and unſpeakable happineſs would it be to a man of judgment, and who is engaged in the purſuit of knowledge, if he had but a power of ſtamping all his own beſt ſentiments on his memory in indelible characters; and if he could but imprint every valuable paragraph and ſentiment of the moſt excellent authors he had read, on his mind, with the ſame ſpeed and facility with which he read them? If a man of good genius and ſagacity could but retain and ſurvey all thoſe numerous, thoſe wiſe and beautiful ideas at once, which have ever paſſed through his thoughts upon any one ſubject, how admirably would he be furniſhed to paſs a juſt judgment about all preſent objects and occurrences? What a glorious entertainment would fill and felicitate his ſpirit, if he could graſp all theſe in a ſingle ſurvey; as the ſkilful eye of a painter runs over a fine and complicate piece of hiſtory wrought by the hand of a TITIAN or a RAPHAEL, views the whole ſcene at once, and feeds himſelf with the extenſive delight? But theſe are joys that do not belong to mortality.

Thus far I have indulged ſome looſe and unconnected thoughts and remarks with regard to the different powers of wit, memory, and judgment. For it was very difficult to throw them into a regular form or method without more room. Let us now with more regularity treat of the memory alone.

Though the memory be a natural faculty of the mind of man, and belongs to ſpirits which are not incarnate, yet it is greatly aſſiſted or hindered, and much diverſified by the brain or the animal nature, to which the ſoul is united in this preſent ſtate. But what part of the brain, that is, wherein the images of things lie treaſured up, is very hard for us to determine with certainty. It is moſt probable that thoſe very fibres, pores, or traces of the brain, which aſſiſt at the firſt idea or perception of any object, are the ſame which aſſiſt alſo at the recollection of it; and then it will follow that the memory has no ſpecial part of the brain devoted to its own ſervice, but uſes all thoſe parts in general which ſubſerve our ſenſations, as well as our thinking and reaſoning powers.

As the memory grows and improves in young perſons from their childhood, and decays in old age, ſo it may be increaſed by art and labour, and proper exerciſe; or it may be injured and quite ſpoiled by ſloth, or by diſeaſe, or a ſtroke on the head. There are ſome reaſonings on this ſubject which make it evident, that the goodneſs of a memory depends in a great degree upon the conſiſtence and the temperature of that part of the brain which is appointed to aſſiſt the exerciſe of all our ſenſible and intellectual faculties.

So for inſtance, in children; they perceive and forget a hundred things in an hour; the brain is ſo ſoft that it receives immediately all impreſſions like water or liquid mud, and retains ſcarcely any of them; all the traces, forms, or images which are drawn there, are immediately effaced or cloſed up again, as though you wrote with your finger on the ſurface of a river, or on a veſſel of oil.

On the contrary, in old age, men have a very feeble remembrance of things that were done of late, that is, the ſame day, or weak, or year; the brain is grown ſo hard that the preſent images or ſtrokes make little or no impreſſion, and therefore they immediately vaniſh. PRISCO, in his ſeventy eighth year, will tell long ſtories of things done when he was in the battle at the *Boyne* almoſt fifty years ago, and when he ſtudied at *Oxford* ſeven years before; for thoſe impreſſions were made when the brain was more ſuſceptive of them;

they have been deeply engraven at the proper ſeaſon, and therefore they remain. But words or things which he lately ſpoke or did, they are immediately forgotten, becauſe the brain is now grown more dry and ſolid in its conſiſtence, and receives not much more impreſſion than if you wrote with your finger on a floor of clay, or a plaiſtered wall.

But in the middle ſtage of life, or it may be from fifteen to fifty years of age, the memory is generally in its happieſt ſtate, the brain eaſily receives and long retains the images and traces which are impreſſed upon it, and the natural ſpirits are more active to range theſe little infinite unknown figures of things in their proper cells or cavities, to preſerve and recollect them.

Whatſoever therefore keeps the brain in its beſt temper and conſiſtence may be a help to preſerve the memory: but exceſs of wine, or luxury of any kind, as well as exceſs in the ſtudies of learning or the buſineſs of life, may overwhelm the memory, by overſtraining and weakening the fibres of the brain, overwaſting the ſpirits, injuring the true conſiſtence of that tender ſubſtance, and confounding the images that are laid up there.

A good memory has theſe ſeveral qualifications, 1. It is ready to receive and admit with great eaſe the various ideas both of words and things which are learned or taught. 2. It is large and copious to treaſure up theſe ideas in great number and variety. 3. It is ſtrong and durable to retain for a conſiderable time thoſe words or thoughts which are committed to it. 4. It is faithful and active to ſuggeſt and recollect upon every proper occaſion, all thoſe words or thoughts which have been recommended to its care, or treaſured up in it.

Now in every one of theſe qualifications a memory may be injured, or may be improved; yet I ſhall not inſiſt diſtinctly on theſe particulars, but only in general propoſe a few rules or directions, whereby this noble faculty of memory, in all its branches and qualifications, may be preſerved or aſſiſted, and ſhow what are the practices that both by reaſon and experience have been found of happy influence to this purpoſe.

There is one great and general direction which belongs to the improvement of other powers as well as of the memory, and that is, to keep it always in due and proper exerciſe. Many acts by degrees form a habit, and thereby the ability or power is ſtrengthened and made more ready to appear again in action. Our memories ſhould be uſed and inured from childhood to bear a moderate quantity of knowledge let into them early, and they will thereby become ſtrong for uſe and ſervice. As any limb well and duly exerciſed grows ſtronger, the nerves of the body are corroborated thereby. MILO took up a calf and daily carried it on his ſhoulders; as the calf grew, his ſtrength grew alſo, and he at laſt arrived at firmneſs of joints enough to bear the bull.

Our memories will be in a great meaſure moulded and formed, improved or injured, according to the exerciſe of them. If we never uſe them they will be almoſt loſt. Thoſe who are wont to converſe or read about a few things only, will retain but a few in their memory; thoſe who are uſed to remember things but for an hour, and charge their memories with it no longer, will retain them but an hour before they vaniſh. And let words be remembered as well as things, that ſo you may acquire a *copia verborum* as well as *rerum*, and be more ready to expreſs your mind on all occaſions.

Yet there ſhould be a caution given in ſome caſes; the memory of a child, or any infirm perſon, ſhould not be overburdened; for a limb or a joint may be overſtrained by being too much loaded, and its natural power never be recovered. Teachers ſhould wiſely judge of the power and conſtitution of youth, and impoſe no more on them than they are able to bear with cheerfulneſs and improvement.

And particularly they ſhould take care, that the memory of the learner be not too much crowded with a tumultuous heap or overbearing multitude of documents or ideas at a time; this is the way to remember nothing; one idea effaces another. An over greedy graſp does not retain the largeſt handful. But it is the exerciſe of memory with a due moderation, that is one general rule towards the improvement of it.

The particular rules are ſuch as theſe—

1. Due attention and diligence to learn and know things which we would commit to our remembrance, is a rule of great neceſſity in this caſe. When the attention is ſtrongly fixed to any particular ſubject, all that is ſaid concerning it makes a deeper impreſſion upon the mind. There are ſome perſons who complain they cannot remember divine or human diſcourſes which they hear, when in truth their thoughts are wandering half the time, or they hear with ſuch coldneſs

and indifferency, and a trifling temper of ſpirit, that it is no wonder the things which are read or ſpoken make but a ſlight impreſſion on the brain, and get no firm footing in the ſeat of memory, but ſoon vaniſh and are loſt.

It is needful therefore, if we would maintain a long remembrance of the things which we read or hear, that we ſhould engage our delight and pleaſure in thoſe ſubjects, and uſe the other methods which are before preſcribed in order to fix the attention. Sloth, indolence, and idleneſs will no more bleſs the mind with intellectual riches, than it will fill the hand with grain, the field with corn, or the purſe with treaſure.

Let it be added alſo, that not only the ſlothful and the negligent deprive themſelves of proper knowledge for the furniture of their memory; but ſuch as appear to have active ſpirits, who are ever ſkimming over the ſurface of things with a volatile temper, and fix nothing in the mind.

VARIO will ſpend whole mornings in running over looſe and unconnected pages, and with freſh curioſity is ever glancing over new words, and ideas that ſtrike the preſent fancy. He is fluttering over a thouſand objects of art and ſcience, and yet treaſures up but little knowledge. There muſt be the labour and the diligence of cloſe attention to particular ſubjects of thought and inquiry, which only can impreſs what we read or think of upon the remembering faculty in man.

2. Clear and diſtinct apprehenſions of the things which we commit to memory, is neceſſary in order to make them ſtick and dwell there. If we would remember words, or learn the names of perſons or things, we ſhould have them recommended to our memory by clear and diſtinct pronunciation, ſpelling, or writing. If we would treaſure the ideas of things, notions, propoſitions, arguments, and ſciences, theſe ſhould be recommended alſo to our memory by a clear and diſtinct perception of them. Faint, glimmering, and confuſed ideas will vaniſh like images ſeen in twilight. Every thing which we learn ſhould be conveyed to the underſtanding in the plaineſt expreſſions without any ambiguity, that we may not miſtake what we deſire to remember. This is a general rule whether we would employ the memory about words or things, though it muſt be confeſt, that mere ſounds and words are much harder to get by heart, than the knowledge of things and real images.

For this reaſon take heed, as I have often before obſerved, that you do not take up with words inſtead of things, nor with mere ſounds, inſtead of real ſentiments and ideas. Many a lad forgets what has been taught him, merely becauſe he never well underſtood it. He never clearly and diſtinctly took in the meaning of thoſe ſounds and ſyllables which he was required to get by heart.

This is one true reaſon why boys make ſo poor a proficiency in learning the Latin tongue, under maſters who teach them by grammars and rules written in Latin, of which I have before ſpoken. This is a common caſe with children, when they learn their catechiſm in their earlier days. The language and ſentiments, conveyed in thoſe catechiſms, are far above the underſtanding of creatures of that age, nor have they any tolerable ideas under the words. This makes the anſwer much harder to be remembered, and in truth they learn nothing but words without ideas; and if they are ever ſo perfect in repeating the words; they know nothing of divinity.

For this reaſon it is a neceſſary rule, in teaching children the firſt principles of religion, that they ſhould be expreſſed in very plain, eaſy and familiar words, brought as low as poſſible down to their underſtandings, according to their different ages and capacities, and thereby they will obtain ſome uſeful knowledge when the words are treaſured up in the memory, becauſe at the ſame time they will treaſure up thoſe divine ideas too.

3. Method and regularity in the things we commit to memory, is neceſſary in order to make them take more effectual poſſeſſion of the mind, and abide there long. As much as ſyſtematical learning is decried by ſome vain and humorous trifles of the age, it is certainly the happieſt way to furniſh the mind with a variety of knowledge.

Whatſoever you would truſt to your memory, let it be diſpoſed in a proper method, connected well together, and referred to diſtinct and particular heads or claſſes, both general and particular. An apothecary's boy will much ſooner learn all the medicines in his maſter's ſhop, when they are ranged in boxes or on ſhelves according to their diſtinct natures, whether herbs, drugs, or minerals, whether leaves or roots, whether chymical or galenical preparations, whether ſimple or compound, &c. and when they are placed in ſome order according to their nature, their fluidity, or their conſiſtence, &c. in phials, bottles, gallipots, caſes, drawers, &c. So the genealogy of a family is more eaſily learnt when you begin at ſome great grandfather as the root, and diſtinguiſh the ſtock, the large boughs, the leſſer branches, the twigs, and the buds, till you come down to the preſent infants of the houſe. And indeed all ſorts of arts and ſciences taught in a method ſomething of this kind, are more happily committed to the mind or memory.

I might give another plain ſimile to confirm the truth of this. What horſe or carriage can take up and bear away all the various, rude, and unwieldly loppings of a branchy tree at once? But if they are divided yet further, ſo as to be laid cloſe, and bound up in a more uniform manner into ſeveral faggots, perhaps thoſe loppings may be all carried as one ſingle load or burden.

The mutual dependence of things on each other, help the memory of both. A wiſe connexion of the parts of a diſcourſe in a rational method, gives great advantage to the reader or hearer in order to his remembrance of it. Therefore many mathematical demonſtrations in a long train may be remembered much better than a heap of ſentences which have no connexion. The book of Proverbs, at leaſt from the tenth chapter and onwards, is much harder to remember than the book of Pſalms, for this reaſon; and ſome chriſtians have told me what is written in the epiſtle to the *Romans*, and that to the *Hebrews*, much better than many others of the ſacred epiſtles, becauſe there is more exact method and connexion obſerved in them.

He that would learn to remember a ſermon which he hears ſhould acquaint himſelf by degrees with the method in which the ſeveral important parts of it are delivered. It is a certain fault in a multitude of preachers, that they utterly neglect method in their harangues; or at leaſt they refuſe to render their method viſible and ſenſible to the hearers. One would be tempted to think it was for fear leſt their auditory ſhould remember too much of their ſermons, and prevent their preaching them three or four times over; but I have candour enough to perſuade myſelf, that the true reaſon is, they imagine it to be a more modiſh way of preaching without particulars; I am ſure it is a much more uſeleſs one. And it would be of great advantage both to the ſpeaker and hearer, to have diſcourſes for the pulpit caſt into a plain and eaſy method, and the reaſons or inferences ranged in a proper order, and that, firſtly, ſecondly, and thirdly, however they may be now fancied to ſound unpolite or unfaſhionable; but Archbiſhop TILLOTSON did not think ſo in his days.

4. A frequent review and careful repetition of the things we would learn, and an abridgment of them in a narrow compaſs for this end, has a great influence to fix them in the memory; therefore it is that the rules of grammar, and uſeful examples of the variation of words, and the peculiar forms of ſpeech in any language, are ſo often appointed by the maſters as leſſons for the ſcholars to be frequently repeated; and they are contracted into tables for frequent review, that what is not fixed in the mind at firſt, may be ſtamped upon the memory by a perpetual ſurvey and rehearſal.

Repetition is ſo uſeful a practice, that MNEMON, even from his youth to his old age never read a book without making ſome ſmall points, daſhes or hooks in the margin, to mark what parts of the diſcourſe were proper for a review; and when he came to the end of a ſection or chapter, he always ſhut his book, and recollected all the ſentiments or expreſſions he had remarked, ſo that he could give a tolerable analyſis and abſtract of every treatiſe he had read, juſt after he had finiſhed it. Thence he became ſo well furniſhed with a rich variety of knowledge.

Even when a perſon is hearing a ſermon, or a lecture, he may give his thoughts leave now and then to ſtep back ſo far as to recollect the ſeveral heads of it from the beginning, two or three times before the lecture or ſermon is finiſhed; the omiſſion or the loſs of a ſentence or two among the amplifications, is richly compenſated by preſerving in the mind the method and order of the whole diſcourſe in the moſt important branches of it.

If we would fix in the memory the diſcourſes we hear, or what we deſign to ſpeak, let us abſtract them into brief compends, and review them often. Lawyers and divines have need of ſuch aſſiſtances; they write down ſhort notes or hints of the principle heads of what they deſire to commit to their memory, in order to preach or plead; for ſuch abſtract and epitomes may be reviewed much ſooner, and the ſeveral amplifying ſentiments or ſentences will be more eaſily invented or recollected in their proper places. The art of ſhort hand is of excellent uſe for this as well as other purpoſes. It muſt be acknowledged, that thoſe who ſcarcely ever take a pen in their hands to write ſhort notes or hints of what they are to ſpeak or learn, who never try to caſt things into method, or to contract the ſurvey of them in order to commit them to memory, had need have a double degree of that natural power of retaining and recollecting what they read or hear, or intend to ſpeak.

Do not plunge yourſelf into other buſineſſes or ſtudies, amuſements or recreations, immediately after you have attended upon inſtruction, if you can well avoid it. Get time if poſſible to recollect the things you have heard, that they may not be waſhed all away from the mind by a torrent of other occurrences or engagements, nor loſt in the crowd or clamour of other loud and importunate affairs.

Talking over the things which you have read with your companions on the firſt proper opportunity you have for it, is to fix them upon the mind. Teach them to your younger friends, in order to eſtabliſh your own knowledge while you communicate it to them. The animal powers of your tongue and of your ear, as well as your intellectual faculties, will all join together to help the memory. HERMETAS ſtudied hard in a remote corner of the land, in ſolitude, yet he became a very learned man. He ſeldom was ſo happy as to enjoy ſuitable ſociety at home, and therefore he talked over to the fields and the woods in the evening what he had been reading in the day, and found ſo conſiderable advantage by this practice, that he recommended it to all his friends, ſince he could ſet his *probatum* to it for ſeventeen years.

5. Pleaſure and delight in the things we learn, gives great aſſiſtance towards the remembrance of them. Whatſoever therefore we deſire that a child ſhould commit to his memory, make it as pleaſant to him as poſſible; endeavour to ſearch his genius and his temper; and let him take in the inſtructions you give him, or the leſſons you appoint him, as far as may be, in a way ſuited to his natural inclination. FABELLUS would never learn any moral leſſons till they were moulded into the form of ſome fiction or fable like thoſe of ESOP, or till they put on the appearance of a parable, like thoſe wherein our bleſſed SAVIOUR taught the ignorant world; then he remembered well the emblematical inſtructions that were given him, and learnt to practiſe the mo-

ral ſenſe and meaning of them. Young SPECTORIUS was taught virtue, by ſetting before him a variety of examples of the various good qualities in human life; and he was appointed daily to repeat ſome ſtory of this kind out of VALERIUS MAXIMUS. The ſame lad was early inſtructed to avoid the common vices and follies of youth in the ſame manner. This is akin to the method whereby the LACEDEMONIANS trained up their children to hate drunkenneſs and intemperance, viz. by bringing a drunken man into their company, and ſhewing them what a beaſt he had made of himſelf. Such viſible and ſenſible forms of inſtruction will make long and uſeful impreſſions upon the memory.

Children may be taught to remember many things in a way of ſport and play. Some young creatures have learnt their letters and ſyllables, and the pronouncing and ſpelling of words, by having them paſted or written upon many little flat tablets or dies. Some have been taught vocabularies of different languages, having a word in one tongue written on one ſide of theſe tablets, and the ſame word in another tongue on the other ſide of them.

There might be many entertaining contrivances for the inſtruction of children in ſeveral things relating to Geometry, Geography and Aſtronomy, in ſuch alluring and luſory methods, which would make a moſt agreeable and laſting impreſſion on their minds.

6. The memory of uſeful things may receive conſiderable aid if they are thrown into verſe; for the numbers, and meaſures, and rhyme, according to the poeſy of different languages, have a conſiderable influence upon mankind, both to make them receive with more eaſe the things propoſed to their obſervation, and preſerve them longer in their remembrance. How many are there of the common affairs of human life, which have been taught in early years by the help of rhyme, and have been like nails faſtened in a ſure place, and rivetted by daily uſe?

So the number of days of each month are engraven on the memory of thouſands by theſe four lines;

Thirty days have September,
June, and April, and November,
February twenty eight alone,
All the reſt have thirty one.

So lads have been taught frugality by ſurveying and judging of their own expences by theſe three lines:

Compute the pence but of one day's expence,
So many pounds and angles, groats and pence,
Are ſpent in one whole year's circumference.

For the number of days in a year is three hundred ſixty-five, which number of pence makes one pound, one angle, one groat, and one penny.

So have rules of health been preſcribed in the book called *Schola Salernitana*, and many a perſon has preſerved himſelf doubtleſs from evening gluttony, and the pains and diſeaſes conſequent upon it, by theſe two lines;

Ex magna cœna ſtomacho ſit maxima pœna:
Ut ſis nocte levis, ſit tibi cœna brevis.

ENGLISHED.

To be eaſy all night,
Let your ſupper be light;
Or elſe you'll complain
Of a ſtomach in pain.

And a hundred proverbial ſentences in various languages are formed into rhyme or a verſe, whereby they are made to ſtick upon the memory of old and young.

It is from this principle that moral rule, have been paſt into a poetic mould from all antiquity. So the golden verſes of the PYTHAGOREANS in Greek; CATO's diſtichs *De Moribus* in Latin; LILLY's precepts to ſcholars called *Qui mihi*, with many others; and this has been done with very good ſucceſs. A line or two of this kind recurring on the memory, have often guarded youth from a temptation to vice and folly, as well as put them in mind of their preſent duty.

It is for this reaſon alſo that the genders, declenſions, and variations of nouns and verbs have been taught in verſe, by thoſe who have complied with the prejudice of long cuſtom, to teach Engliſh children the Latin tongue by rules written in Latin; and truly thoſe rude heaps of words and terminations of an unknown tongue, would have never been ſo happily learnt by heart by a hundred thouſand boys without this ſmoothing artifice; nor indeed do I know any thing elſe can be ſaid with good reaſon, to excuſe or relieve the obvious abſurdities of this practice.

When you would remember new things or words, endeavour to aſſociate and connect them with ſome words or things which you have well known before, and which are fixed and eſtabliſhed in your memory. This aſſociation of ideas is of great importance and force, and may be of excellent uſe in many inſtances of human life. One idea which is familar to the mind, connected with others which are new and ſtrange, will bring thoſe new ideas into eaſy remembrance. MARONIDES had got the firſt hundred lines of VIRGIL's ÆNEIS printed upon his memory ſo perfectly, that he knew not only the order and number of every verſe from one to a hundred in perfection, but the order and number of every word in each verſe alſo; and by this mean he would undertake to remember two or three hundred names of perſons or things by ſome rational or fantaſtic connexion between ſome word in the verſe, and ſome letter, ſyllable, property, or accident of the name or thing to be remembered, even though they had been repeated but once or twice at moſt in his hearing. ANIMANTO practiſed much the ſame art of memory, by getting the Latin names of twenty two animals into his head according to the alphabet, viz. *aſinus*, *baſiliſcus*, *canis*, *draco*, *elephas*, *felis*, *gryphus*, *hircus*, *juvencus*, *leo*, *mulus*, *noctua*, *ovis*, *panthera*, *quadrupes*, *rhinoceros*, *ſimia*, *taurus*, *urſus*, *xiphias*, *hyæna* or *yæna*, *zibetta*. Moſt of theſe he divided into four parts, viz. head and body, feet, fins or wings, and tail, and by ſome arbitrary or chimerical attachment of each of theſe to a word or thing which he deſired to remember, he committed them to the care of his memory, and that with good ſucceſs.

It is alſo by this aſſociation of ideas, that we may better imprint any new idea upon the memory, by joining with it ſome circumſtance of the time, place, company, &c. wherein we firſt obſerved, heard, or learnt it. If we would recover an abſent idea, it is uſeful to recollect thoſe circumſtances of time, place, &c. The ſubſtance will many times be recovered and brought to the thoughts by recollecting the ſhadow; a man recurs to our fancy by remembering his garment, his ſize, or ſtature, his office, or employment, &c. A beaſt, bird, or fiſh, by its colour, figure, or motion, by the cage, or courtyard, or ciſtern wherein it was kept.

To this head alſo we may refer that remembrance of names and things which may be derived from our recollection of their likeneſs to other things which we know; either their reſemblance in name, character, form, accident, or any thing that belongs to them. An idea or word which has been loſt or forgotten, has been often recovered by hitting upon ſome other kindred word or idea, which has the neareſt reſemblance to it, and that in the letters, ſyllables, or ſound of the name, as well as properties of the thing.

If we would remember HIPPOCRATES, or GALEN, or PARACELSUS, think of a phyſician's name, beginning with H, G, or P. If we would remember OVIDIUS NASO, we may repreſent a man with a great noſe; if PLATO, we may think upon a perſon with large ſhoulders; if CRISPUS, we ſhall fancy another with curled hair; and ſo of other things.

And ſometimes a new or ſtrange idea may be fixed in the memory, by conſidering its contrary or oppoſite. So if we cannot hit upon the word GOLIATH, the remembrance of DAVID may recover it; or the name of a *Trojan* may be recovered by thinking of a *Greek*, &c.

8. In ſuch caſes wherein it may be done, ſeek after a local memory, or a remembrance of what you have read by the ſide or page where it is written or printed; whether the right or the left, whether at the top, the middle, or the bottom; whether at the beginning of a chapter or a paragraph, or the end of it. It has been ſome advantage, for this reaſon, to accuſtom one's ſelf to books of the ſame edition; and it has been of conſtant and ſpecial uſe to divines and private chriſtians, to be furniſhed with ſeveral bibles of the ſame edition, that whereſoever they are, whether in their chamber, parlour, or ſtudy, in the younger or elder years of life, they may find the chapters and verſes ſtanding in the ſame parts of the page.

This is alſo a great conveniency to be obſerved by printers in the new editions of Grammars, Pſalms, Teſtaments, &c. to print every chapter, paragraph or verſe, in the ſame part of the page as the former, that ſo it may yield an happy aſſiſtance to thoſe young learners who find, and even feel, the advantage of a local memory.

9. Let every thing we deſire to remember be fairly and diſtinctly written and divided into periods, with large characters in the beginning, for by this mean we ſhall the more readily imprint the matter and words on our minds, and recollect them with a glance, the more remarkable the writing appears to the eye. This ſenſe conveys the ideas to the fancy better than any other; and what we have ſeen is not ſo ſoon forgotten as what we have only heard. what HORACE affirms of the mind or paſſions may be ſaid alſo of the memory.

Segnius irritant animos demiſſa per aurem
Quam quæ ſunt oculis ſubjecta fidelibus, et quæ
Ipſe ſibi tradit ſpectator.

Applied in ENGLISH.

Sounds which addreſs the ear are loſt and die
In one ſhort hour; but that which ſtrikes the eye
Lives long upon the mind; the faithful ſight
Engraves the knowledge with a beam of light.

For the aſſiſtance of weak memories, the firſt letters or words of every period, in every page, may be written in diſtinct colours; yellow, green, red, black, &c. and if you obſerve the ſame order of colours in the following ſentences, it may be ſtill the better. This will make a great impreſſion, and may much aid the memory.

Under this head we may take notice of the advantage which the memory gains, by having the ſeveral objects of our learning drawn out into ſchemes and tables; matters of mathematical ſcience and natural philoſophy are not only let into the underſtanding, but preſerved in the memory by figures and diagrams. The ſituation of the ſeveral parts of the earth are better learnt by one day's converſing with a map or ſea chart, than by mere reading the diſcription of their ſituation a hundred times over in books of Geography. So the conſtellations in Aſtronomy, and their poſition in the heavens, are more eaſily remembered by hemiſpheres of the ſtars well drawn. It is by having ſuch ſort of memorials, figures, and tables hung round our ſtudies, or places of reſidence or reſort, that our memory of thoſe things will be greatly aſſiſted and improved, as I have ſhewn at large in the twentieth chapter, of the Uſe of the Sciences.

I might add here alſo, that once writing over what we deſign to remember, and giving due attention to what we write, will fix it more in the mind than reading it five times. And in the ſame manner, if we had a plan of the naked lines of longitude and latitude, projected on the meridian printed for this uſe, a learner might much more ſpeedily advanced himſelf in the knowledge of Geography by his own drawing the figures of all parts of the world upon it by imitation, than by many days ſurvey of a map of the world ſo printed. The ſame alſo may be ſaid concerning the conſtellations of heaven, drawn by the learner on a naked projection of the circles of the ſphere upon the plane of the equator.

10. It has ſometimes been the practice of men to imprint names or ſentences on their memory, by taking the firſt letters of every word of that ſentence, or of thoſe names, and making a new word out of them. So the name of Maccabees is borrowed from the firſt letters of the Hebrew words which make that ſentence, *Mi camoka baelim Jehovah*, i.e. Who is like thee among the gods? which was written on their banners. JESUS CHRIST, our Saviour, hath been called a fiſh, in Greek ICHTHUS, by the fathers, becauſe theſe are the firſt letters of thoſe Greek words, Jeſus Chriſt, God's Son, the Saviour. So the word *vibgyor* teaches us to remember the order of the ſeven colours, as they appear by the ſun beams caſt through a priſm on white paper, or formed by the ſun in a rain bow, according to the different refrangibility of the rays, viz. violet, indigo, blue, green, yellow, orange and red.

In this manner the Hebrew grammarians teach their ſtudents to remember the letters which change their natural pronunciation by the inſcription of a *dageſh*, by gathering theſe ſix letters, *beth*, *gimel*, *daleth*, *caph*, *pe*, aud *thau*, into the word *begadchephat*; and that they might not forget the letters named quieſcent, viz, a, h, v, and i, they are joined in the word ahevi. So the univerſal and particular propoſitions in Logic, are remembered by the words *barbara*, *celarent*, *darii*, &c.

Other artificial helps to memory may be juſt mentioned here.

Dr. GREY, in his book called *Memoria Technica*, has exchanged the figures 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, for ſome conſonants, b, d, t, f, l, y, p, k, n, and ſome vowels, a, e, i, o, u, and ſeveral dipthongs, and thereby formed words that denote numbers, which may be more eaſily remembered; and Mr. LOWE has improved his ſcheme in a ſmall pamphlet called Mnemonics Delineated, whereby, in ſeven leaves, he has compriſed almoſt an infinity of things in ſcience and in common life, and reduced them to a ſort of meaſure like Latin verſe; though the words may be ſuppoſed to be very barbarous, being ſuch a mixture of vowels and conſonants are very unfit for harmony.

But after all, the very writers on this ſubject have confeſſed, that ſeveral of theſe artificial helps of memory are ſo cumberſome as not to be ſuitable to every temper or perſon; nor are they of any uſe for the delivery of a diſcourſe by memory, nor of much ſervice in learning the ſciences; but they may be ſometimes practiſed for the aſſiſting our remembrance of certain ſentences, numbers, or names.

CHAP. XVIII.

Of Determining a Queſtion.

I.

WHEN a ſubject is propoſed to your thoughts, conſider whether it be knowable at all, or not; and then whether it be not above the reach of your inquiry and knowledge in the preſent ſtate; and remember that it is a waſte of time, to buſy yourſelves too much amongſt unſearchables; the chief uſe of theſe ſtudies is to keep the mind humble, by finding its own ignorance and weakneſs.

II. CONSIDER again whether the matter be worthy of your inquiry at all; and then, how far it may be worthy of your preſent ſearch and labour according to your age, your time of life, your ſtation in the world, your capacity, your profeſſion, your chief deſign and end. There are many things worth inquiry to one man, which are not ſo to another; and there are things that may deſerve the ſtudy of the ſame perſon

ſon in one part of life, which would be improper or impertinent at another. To read books of the art of preaching, or diſputes about church diſcipline, are proper for a theological ſtudent in the end of his academical ſtudies, but not at the beginning of them. To purſue mathematical ſtudies very largely, may be uſeful for a profeſſor of philoſophy, but not for a divine.

III. Consider whether the ſubject of your inquiry be eaſy or difficult; whether you have ſufficient foundation or ſkill, furniture and advantages, for the purſuit of it. It would be madneſs for a young ſtatuary to attempt at firſt to carve a Venus or a Mercury, and eſpecially without proper tools. And it is equal folly for a man to pretend to make great improvement in natural philoſophy without due experiments.

IV. Consider whether the ſubject be any ways uſeful or not, before you engage in the ſtudy of it; often put this queſtion to yourſelves, *Cui bono?* to what purpoſe? what end will it attain? Is it for the glory of God, for the good of men, for your own advantage, for the removal of any natural or moral evil, for the attainment of any natural or moral good? Will the profit be equal to the labour? There are many ſubtle impertinencies learnt in the ſchools, many painful trifles even among the mathematical theorems and problems, many *difficiles nugæ*, or laborious follies of various kinds, which ſome ingenious men have been engaged in. A due reflection upon theſe things will call the mind away from vain amuſements, and ſave much time.

V. Consider what tendency it has to make you wiſe and better, as well as to make you more learned; and thoſe queſtions which tend to wiſdom and prudence in our conduct among men, as well as piety toward God, are doubtleſs more important, and preferable beyond all thoſe inquiries which only improve our knowledge in mere ſpeculations.

VI. If the queſtion appear to be well worth your diligent application, and you are furniſhed with the neceſſary requiſites to purſue it, then conſider whether it be dreſt up and entangled in more words than is needful, and contain or include more complicated ideas than is neceſſary; and if ſo, endeavour to reduce it to a greater ſimplicity and plainneſs, which will make the inquiry and argument eaſier and plainer all the way.

VII. If it be ſtated in an improper, obſcure, or irregular form, it may be meliorated by changing the phraſe, or tranſpoſing the parts of it; but be careful always to keep the grand and important point of inquiry the ſame, in your new ſtating the queſtion. Little tricks and deceits of ſophiſtry, by ſliding in, or leaving out ſuch words as entirely change the queſtion, ſhould be abandoned and renounced by all fair diſputants and honeſt ſearchers after truth.

The ſtating the queſtion with clearneſs and juſtice goes a great way many times toward the anſwering it. The greateſt part of true knowledge lies in a diſtinct perception of things which are in themſelves diſtinct; and ſome men give more light and knowledge by the bare ſtating of the queſtion with perſpicuity and juſtice, than others by talking of it in groſs confuſion for whole hours together. To ſtate a queſtion is but to ſeparate and diſentangle the parts of it from one another, as well as from every thing which doth not concern the queſtion, and then to lay the diſentangled parts of the queſtion in due order and method; oftentimes without more ado, this fully reſolves the doubt, and ſhows the mind where the truth lies, without argument or diſpute.

VIII. If the queſtion relate to an axiom or firſt principle of truth, remember that a long train of conſequences may depend upon it, therefore it ſhould not be ſuddenly admitted or received.

It is not enough to determine the truth of a propoſition, much leſs to raiſe it to the honour of an axiom or firſt principle, to ſay, that it has been believed through many ages, that it has been received by many nations, that it is almoſt univerſally acknowledged, or nobody denies it, that it is eſtabliſhed by human laws, or that temporal penalties or reproaches will attend the diſbelief of it.

IX. Nor is it enough to forbid any propoſition the title of an axiom, becauſe it has been denied by ſome perſons, and doubted of by others; for ſome perſons have been unreaſonably credulous, and others have been as unreaſonably ſceptical. Then only ſhould a propoſition be called an axiom or a ſelf evident truth, when by a moderate attention to the ſubject and predicate, their connexion appears in ſo plain a light, and ſo clear an evidence, as needs no third idea, or middle term, to prove them to be connected.

X. While you are in ſearch after truth in queſtions of a doubtful nature, or ſuch as you have not yet thoroughly examined, keep up a juſt indifference to either ſide of the queſtion, if you would be led honeſtly into the truth; for a deſire or inclination leaning to either ſide, biaſſes the judgment ſtrangly; whereas by this indifference for every thing but truth, you will be excited to examine fairly inſtead of preſuming, and your aſſent will be ſecured from going beyond your evidence.

XI. For the moſt part people are born to their opinions, and never queſtion the truth of what their family, or their country, or their party profeſs. They clothe their minds as they do their bodies, after the faſhion in vogue, nor one of a hundred ever examines his principles. It is ſuſpected of lukewarmneſs to ſuppoſe examination neceſſary, and it will be charged as a tendency to appoſtacy if we go about to examine them. Perſons are applauded for preſuming they are in the right, and, as Mr. Locke ſaith, he that conſiders and inquires into the reaſon of things, is counted a foe to orthodoxy, becauſe poſſibly he may deviate from ſome of the received doctrines. And thus men without any induſtry or acquiſition of their own, lazy and idle as they are, inherit local truths, that is, the truths of that place where they live, and are inured to aſſent without evidence.

This has a long and unhappy influence; for if a man can bring his mind once to be poſitive and fierce for propoſitions whoſe evidence he has never examined, and that in matters of the greateſt concernment, he will naturally follow this ſhort and eaſy way of judging and believing in caſes of leſs moment, and build all his opinions upon inſufficient grounds.

XII. In determining a queſtion, eſpecially when it is a matter of difficulty and importance, do not take up with partial examination; but turn your thoughts on all ſides, to gather in all the light you can towards the ſolution of it. Take time, and uſe all the helps that are to be obtained, before you fully determine, excepting only where preſent neceſſity of action calls for ſpeedy determination.

If you would know what may be called a partial examination, take theſe inſtances, viz.

When you examine an object of ſenſe, or inquire into ſome matter of ſenſation at too great a diſtance from the object or in an inconvenient ſituation of it, or under any indiſpoſition of the organs, or any diſguiſe whatever relating to the medium or the organ of the object itſelf, or when you examine it by the ſenſe only, where others might be employed; or when you inquire into it by ſenſe only, without the uſe of the underſtanding, judgment, and reaſon.

If it be a queſtion which is to be determined by reaſon and argument, then your examination is partial, when you turn the queſtion only in one light, and do not turn it on all ſides; when you look upon it only in its relations and aſpects to one ſort of objects, and not to another; when you conſider only the advantages of it, and the reaſons for it, and neglect to think of the reaſons againſt it, and never ſurvey its inconveniences too; when you determine on a ſudden, before you have given yourſelf due time for weighing all circumſtances, &c.

Again. If it be a queſtion of fact depending on the report or teſtimony of men, your examination is but partial, when you inquire only what one man or a few ſay, and avoid the teſtimony of others; when you only aſk what thoſe report who are not eye or ear witneſſes, and neglect thoſe who ſaw and heard it; when you content yourſelf with mere looſe and general talk about it, and never enter into particulars; or when there are many who deny the fact, and you never concern yourſelf about their reaſons for denying it, but reſolve to believe only thoſe who affirm it.

There is yet further a fault in your partial examination of any queſtion, when you reſolve to determine it by natural reaſon only, where you might be aſſiſted by ſupernatural revelation; or when you decide the point by ſome word or ſentence, or by ſome part of revelation, without comparing it with other parts, which might give further light and better help to determine the meaning.

It is alſo a culpable partiality if you examine ſome doubtful or pretended viſion or revelation without the uſe of reaſon; or without the uſe of that revelation, which is undoubted and ſufficiently proved to be divine. Theſe are all inſtances of imperfect examination, and we ſhould never determine a queſtion by one or two lights, where we may have the advantage of three or four.

XIII. TAKE heed leſt ſome darling notion, ſome favourite hypotheſis, ſome beloved doctrine, or ſome common but unexamined opinion, be made a teſt of the truth or falſehood of all other propoſitions about the ſame ſubject. Dare not build much upon ſuch a notion or doctrine till it be very fully examined, accurately adjuſted, and ſufficiently confirmed. Some perſons, by indulging ſuch a practice, have been led into long ranks of errours; they have found themſelves involved in a train of miſtakes, by taking up ſome pretty hypotheſis or principle, either in philoſophy, politics, or religion, upon ſlight and inſufficient grounds, and eſtabliſhing that as a teſt and rule by which to judge of all other things.

XIV. For the ſame reaſon, have a care of ſuddenly determining any one queſtion on which the determination of any kindred or parallel caſes will eaſily or naturally follow. Take heed of receiving any wrong turn in your early judgment of things. Be watchful, as far as poſſible, againſt any falſe bias, which may be given to the underſtanding, eſpecially in younger years. The indulgence of ſome one ſilly opinion, or the giving credit to one fooliſh fable, lays the mind open to be impoſed upon by many. The antient *Romans* were taught to believe, that ROMULUS and REMUS, the founders of their ſtate and empire, were expoſed in the woods, and nurſed by a wolf. This ſtory prepared their minds for the reception of any tales of the like nature, relating to other countries. TROGUS POMPEIUS would enforce the belief, that one of the antient kings of *Spain*, was alſo nurſed and ſuckled by a hart, from the fable of ROMULUS and REMUS. It was by the ſame influence they learned to give up their hopes and fears to omens and ſoothſaying, when they were once perſuaded that the greatneſs of their empire, and the glory of ROMULUS their founder, were predicted by the happy omen of twelve vulters appearing to him when he ſought where to build the city. They readily received all the following legends of prodigies, auguries, and prognoſtics, for many ages together, with which LIVY has furniſhed his huge hiſtory.

So the child, who is once taught to believe any one occurrence to be a good or evil omen, or any day of the month or weak to be lucky or unlucky, has a wide inroad made on the ſoundneſs of his underſtanding in the following judgments of his life. He lies ever open to all the ſilly impreſſions and idle tales of nurſes, and imbibes many a fooliſh ſtory with greedineſs, which he muſt unlearn again, if ever he become acquainted with truth and wiſdom.

XV. Have a care of intereſting your warm and religious zeal in thoſe matters, which are not ſufficiently evident in themſelves, or which are not fully and thoroughly examined and proved; for this zeal, whether right or wrong, when it is once engaged, will have a powerful influence to eſtabliſh your own minds in thoſe doctrines, which are really doubtful, and to ſtop up all the avenues of further light. This will bring upon the ſoul a ſort of ſacred awe and dread of hereſy; with a divine concern to maintain whatever opinion you have eſpouſed as divine, though perhaps you have eſpouſed it without any juſt evidence, and ought to have renounced it as falſe and pernicious.

We ought to be zealous for the moſt important points of our religion, 'and to contend earneſtly for the faith once delivered to the ſaints;' but we ought not to employ this ſacred fervour of ſpirit in the ſervice of any article, till we have ſeen it made out with plain and ſtrong conviction, that it is a neceſſary or important point of faith or practice, and is either an evident dictate of the light of nature, or an aſſured article of revelation. Zeal muſt not reign over the powers of our underſtanding, but obey them. God is the God of light and truth, a God of reaſon and order, and he never requires mankind to uſe their natural faculties amiſs for the ſupport of his cauſe. Even the moſt myſterious and ſublime doctrines of revelation are not to be believed without a juſt reaſon for it; nor ſhould our pious affections be engaged in the defence of them, till we have plain and convincing proofs that they are certainly revealed, though perhaps we may never in this world attain to ſuch clear and diſtinct ideas of them as we deſire.

XVI. As a warm zeal ought never to be employed in the defence of any revealed truth, till our reaſon be well convinced of the revelation; ſo neither ſhould wit and banter, jeſt and ridicule, ever be indulged to oppoſe and aſſault any doctrines of profeſſed revelation, till reaſon has proved they are not really revealed; and even then theſe methods ſhould be uſed very ſeldom, and with the utmoſt caution and prudence. Raillery and wit were made to anſwer our inquiries after truth, and to determine a queſtion of rational controverſy; though they may ſometimes be ſerviceable to expoſe to contempt thoſe inconſiſtent follies which have been firſt abundantly refuted by argument; they ſerve indeed only to cover nonſenſe with ſhame, when reaſon has firſt proved it to be mere nonſenſe.

It is therefore a ſilly and moſt unreaſonable teſt which ſome of our Deiſts have introduced to judge of divine revelation, viz. To try if it will bear ridicule and laughter. They are effectually beaten in all their combats at the weapons of men, that is, reaſon and argument; and it would not be unjuſt, though it is a little uncourtly, to ſay, that they would now attack our religion with the talents of a vile animal, that is, grin and grimace.

I cannot think that a jeſter or a monkey, a droll or a puppet, can be proper judges or deciders of controverſy. That which dreſſes up all things in diſguiſe, is not likely to lead us into any juſt ſentiments about them. PLATO or SOCRATES, CÆSAR or ALEXANDER, might have a fool's coat clapt upon any of them, and perhaps in this diſguiſe, neither the wiſdom of the one, nor the majeſty of the other, would ſecure them from a ſneer; this treatment would never inform us whether they were kings or ſlaves, whether they were fools or philoſophers. The ſtrongeſt reaſoning, the beſt ſenſe, and the politeſt thoughts, may be ſet in a moſt ridiculous light by this grinning faculty; the moſt obvious axioms of eternal truth may be dreſt in a very fooliſh form and wrapt up in artful abſurdities by this talent; but they are truth and reaſon, and good ſenſe ſtill. EUCLID, with all his demonſtrations, might be ſo covered and overwelmed with banter, that a beginner in the mathematics might be tempted to doubt whether his theorems were true or no, and to imagine they could never be uſeful. So weaker minds might be eaſily prejudiced againſt the nobleſt principle of truth and goodneſs; and the younger part of mankind might be beat off from the belief of the moſt ſerious, the moſt rational and important points, even of natural religion, by the impudent jeſts of a profane wit. The moral duties of the civil life, as well as the articles of chriſtianity, may be painted over with the colours of folly, and expoſed upon a ſtage, ſo as to ruin all ſocial and perſonal virtue among the gay and thoughtleſs part of the world.

XVII. IT ſhould be obſerved alſo, that theſe very men cry out loudly againſt the uſe of all ſevere railing and reproach in debates, all panalties and perſecutions of the ſtate, in order to convince the minds and conſciences of men, and determine points of truth and errour. Now I renounce theſe penal and ſmarting methods of conviction as much as they do, and yet I think ſtill theſe are every whit as wiſe, as juſt and as good for this purpoſe, as banter and ridicule. Why ſhould public mockery in print, or a merry joke upon a ſtage, be a better teſt of truth, than ſevere railing ſarcaſms, and public perſecutions and penalties? Why ſhould more light be derived to the underſtanding by a ſong of ſcurrilous mirth, or a witty ballad, then there is by a rude cudgel? When a profeſſor of any religion is ſet up to be laughed at, I cannot ſee how this ſhould help us to judge of the truth of his faith any better than if he were ſcourged. The jeers of a theatre, the pillory, and the whipping-poſt, are very near akin. When the perſon or his opinion is made the jeſt of the mob, or his back the ſhambles of the executioner, I think there is no more conviction in the one than in the other.

XVIII. Besides, ſuppoſing it is but barely poſſible that the great God ſhould reveal his mind and will to men by miricle, viſion, or inſpiration, it is a piece of contempt and profane inſolence to treat any tolerable or rational appearance of ſuch a revelation with jeſt and laughter, in order to find whether it be divine or no. And yet if this be a proper teſt of revelation, it may be properly applied to the true as well as the falſe, in order to diſtinguiſh it. Suppoſe a royal proclamation was ſent to a diſtant part of the kingdom, and ſome of the ſubjects ſhould doubt whether it came from the king or no; is it poſſible that wit and ridicule ſhould ever decide the point? Or would the prince ever think himſelf treated with juſt honour to have his proclamation canvaſſed in this manner on a public ſtage, and become the ſport of buffoons, in order to determine the queſtion, Whether it is the word of a king or no?

Let ſuch ſort of writers go on at their deareſt peril, and ſport themſelves in their own deceivings; let them at their peril make a jeſt at the Bible, and treat the ſacred articles of Chriſtanity with ſcoff and merriment; but then let them lay aſide all their pretences to reaſon as well as religion; and as they expoſe themſelves by ſuch writings to the neglect and contempt of men, ſo let them prepare to meet the majeſty and indignation of God without timely repentance.

XIX. In reading philoſophical, moral, or religious controverſies, never raiſe your eſteem of any opinion by the aſſurance and zeal wherewith the author aſſerts it, nor by the higheſt praiſes he beſtows upon it; nor on the other hand, let your eſteem of an opinion be abated, nor your averſion to it raiſed by the ſupercilious contempt caſt upon it by a warm writer, nor by the ſovereign airs with which he condemns it. Let the force of argument alone influence your aſſent or diſſent. Take care that your ſoul be not warped or biaſſed on one ſide or the other, by any ſtrains of flattering or abuſive language; for there is no queſtion whatſoever but hath ſome ſuch ſort of defenders and oppoſers. Leave thoſe writers to their own follies, who practiſe thus upon the weakneſs of their readers without argument; leave them to triumph in their own fancied poſſeſſions and victories; it is oftentimes found that their poſſeſſions are but a heap of errours, and their boaſted victories are but overbearing noiſe and clamour to ſilence the voice of truth.

In philoſophy and religion the bigots of all parties are generally the moſt poſitive, and deal much in this ſort of argument. Sometimes theſe are the weapons of pride; for a haughty man ſuppoſes all his opinions to be infallible, and imagines the contrary ſentiments are ever ridiculous, and not worthy of notice. Sometimes theſe ways of talking are the mere arms of ignorance; the men who uſe them know little of the oppoſite ſide of the queſtion, and therefore they exult in their own vain pretences to knowledge, as though no man of ſenſe could oppoſe their opinion. They rail at an objection againſt their own ſentiments, becauſe they can find no other anſwer to it but railing. And men of learning, by their exceſſive vanity have been ſometimes tempted into the ſame inſolent practice as well as the ignorant.

Yet let it be remembered too, that there are ſome truths ſo plain and evident, that the oppoſition to them is ſtrange, unaccountable, and almoſt monſtrous; and in vindication of ſuch truths a writer of good ſenſe may ſometimes be allowed to uſe a degree of aſſurance, and pronounce them ſtrongly with an air of confidence, while he defends them with reaſons of convincing force.

XX. Sometimes a queſtion may be propoſed, which is of ſo large and extenſive a nature, and refers to ſuch a multitude of ſubjects, as ought not in juſtice to be determined at once by a ſingle argument or anſwer; as if one ſhould aſk me, are you a profeſſed diſciple of the Stoics or the Platoniſts? Do you receive and aſſent to the principles of Gassendus, Descartes, or Sir Isaac Newton? Have you choſen the hypotheſis of Tycho or Copernicus? Have you devoted yourſelf to the ſentiments of Arminius or Calvin? Are your notions Epiſcopal, Preſbyterian, or Independent, &c. I think it may be very proper in ſuch caſes not to give an anſwer in the groſs, but rather to enter into a detail of particulars, and explain one's own ſentiments. Perhaps there is no man, nor ſet of men upon earth, whoſe ſentiments I entirely follow. God has given me reaſon to judge for myſelf, and though I may ſee ſufficient ground to agree to the greateſt part of the opinions of one perſon or party, yet it does by no means follow that I ſhould receive them all. Truth does not always go by the lump, nor does errour tincture and ſpoil all the articles of belief that ſome one party profeſſes.

Since there are difficulties attend every ſcheme of human knowledge, it is enough for me in the main to incline to that ſide which has the feweſt difficulties; and I would endeavour, as far as poſſible, to correct the miſtakes or the harſh expreſſions of one party, by ſoftening and reconciling methods, by reducing the extremes, and by borrowing ſome of the beſt principles or phraſes from another. Cicero was one of the greateſt men of antiquity, and gives us an account of the various opinions of philoſophers in his age; but he himſelf was of the Eclectic ſect, and choſe out of each of them ſuch poſitions as in his wiſeſt judgment came neareſt to the truth.

XXI. When you are called in the courſe of life or religion to judge and determine concerning any queſtion, and to affirm or deny it, take a full ſurvey of the objections againſt it, as well as of the arguments for it, as far as your time and circumſtances admit, and ſee on which ſide the preponderation falls. If either of the objections againſt any propoſition, or the arguments for the defence of it, carry in them moſt undoubted evidence, and are plainly anſwerable, they will and ought to conſtrain the aſſent, though there may be many ſeeming probabilities on the other ſide, which at firſt ſight would flatter the judgment to favour it. But where the reaſons on both ſides are very near of equal weight, there ſuſpenſion or doubt is our duty, unleſs in caſes wherein preſent determination or practice is required, and there we muſt act according to the preſent appearing preponderation of reaſons.

XXII. In matters of moment and importance, it is our duty indeed to ſeek after certain and concluſive arguments, if they can be found, in order to determine a queſtion; but where the matter is of little conſequence, it is not worth our labour to ſpend much time in ſeeking after certainties; it is ſufficient here, if probable reaſons offer themſelves. And even in matters of greater importance, eſpecially where daily practice is neceſſary, and where we cannot attain any ſufficient or certain grounds to determine a queſtion on either ſide, we muſt then take up with ſuch probable arguments as we can arrive at. But this general rule ſhould be obſerved, viz. to take head that our aſſent be no ſtronger, or riſe no higher in the degree of it, than the probable argument will ſupport.

XXIII. There are many things even in religion, as well as in philoſophy and civil life, which we believe with very different degrees of aſſent; and this is, or ſhould be always regulated according to the different degrees of evidence which we enjoy; and perhaps there are a thouſand gradations in our aſſent to the things we believe, becauſe there are thouſands of circumſtances relating to different queſtions, which increaſe or diminiſh the evidence we have concerning them, and that in matters both of reaſon and revelation.

I believe there is a God, and that obedience is due to him from every reaſonable creature; this I am moſt fully aſſured of, becauſe I have the ſtrongeſt evidence, ſince it is the plain dictate of reaſon and revelation.

Again, I believe there is a future reſurrection of the dead; becauſe ſcripture tells us ſo in the plaineſt terms, though reaſon ſays nothing of it. I believe alſo, that the ſame matter of our bodies which died, in part at leaſt, ſhall ariſe; but I am not ſo fully aſſured of this circumſtance, becauſe the revelation of it is not quite ſo clear and expreſs. Yet further, I believe that the good men who were acquainted here on earth, ſhall know each other in heaven; but my perſuaſion of it is not abſolutely certain, becauſe my aſſent to it ariſes only from circumſtantial reaſonings of men upon what God has told us, and therefore my evidences are not ſtrong beyond a poſſibility of miſtake. This direction cannot be too often repeated, that our aſſent ought always to keep pace with our evidence ; and our belief of any propoſition ſhould never riſe higher than the proof or evidence we have to ſupport it, nor ſhould our faith run faſter than right reaſon can encourage it.

XXIV. Perhaps it will be objected here, 'Why then does our Saviour, in the hiſtories of the goſpel, ſo much commend a ſtrong faith, and lay out both his miraculous benefits, and his praiſes upon ſome of thoſe poor creatures of little reaſoning, who profeſt an aſſured belief of his commiſſion and power to heal them?'

I anſwer, The God of nature has given every man his own reaſon to be the judge of evidence to himſelf in particular, and to direct his aſſent in all things about which he is called to judge; and even the matters of revelation are to be believed by us, becauſe our reaſon pronounces the revelation to be true. Therefore the great God will not, or cannot, in any inſtances, require us to aſſent to any thing without reaſonable or ſufficient evidence, nor to believe any propoſition more ſtrongly than what our evidence for it will ſupport. We have therefore abundant ground to believe, that thoſe perſons of whom our Saviour requires ſuch a ſtrong faith, or whom he commends for their ſtrong faith, had as ſtrong and certain evidence of his power and commiſſion from the credible and inconteſtable reports they had heard of his miracles, which were wrought on purpoſe to give evidence to his commiſſion*. Now in ſuch a caſe both this ſtrong faith and the open profeſſion of it were very worthy of public encouragement and praiſe from our Saviour, becauſe of the great and public oppoſition which the magiſtrates, and the prieſts, and the doctors of the age made againſt Jeſus the man of *Nazareth*, when he appeared as the Meſſiah.

---

* *When our Saviour gently reproves* Thomas *for his unbelief, John* xx. 29. *he does it in theſe words, 'Becauſe thou haſt ſeen me,* Thomas, *thou haſt believed' : Bleſſed are they who have not ſeen, and yet have believed, that is, Bleſſed are they who, though they have not been favoured with the evidence of their ſenſes as thou haſt been, yet have been convinced by the reaſonable and ſufficient moral evidence of the well grounded report of others, and have believed in me upon that evidence. Of this moral evidence* Mr. Ditton *writes exceedingly well, in his book of the reſurrection of Chriſt.*

And beſides all this it may be reaſonably ſuppoſed, with regard to ſome of thoſe ſtrong exerciſes of faith which are required and commended, that theſe believers had ſome further hints of inward evidence and immediate revelation from God himſelf; as when St. PETER confeſſes Chriſt to be the Son of God, Matt. xvi. 16, 17. our bleſſed Saviour commends him ſaying, Bleſſed art thou, SIMON BAR JONA; but he adds, fleſh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my father which is in heaven.

And the ſame may be ſaid concerning the faith of miracles, the exerciſe whereof was ſometimes required of the diſciples and others, that is, when by inward and divine influences God aſſured them ſuch miracles ſhould be wrought, their obedience to and compliance with theſe divine illuminations was expected and commended. Now this ſupernatural inſpiration carried ſufficient evidence with it to them, as well as to the ancient prophets, though we who never felt it are not ſo capable to judge and diſtinguiſh it.

XXV. WHAT is ſaid before concerning truth or doctrines may be alſo affirmed concerning duties; the reaſon of both is the ſame; as the one are truths for our ſpeculation, the others are truths for our practice. Duties which are expreſsly required in the plain language of ſcripture, or dictated by the moſt evident reaſoning upon firſt principles, ought to bind our conſciences more than thoſe which are but dubiouſly inferred, and that only from occaſional occurrences, incidents, and circumſtances; as for inſtance, I am certain that I ought to pray to God; my conſcience is bound to this, becauſe there are moſt evident commands for it to be found in ſcripture, as well as to be derived from reaſon. I believe alſo that I may pray to God, either by a written form, or without one, becauſe neither reaſon nor revelation expreſsly requires either of theſe modes of prayer at all times, or forbids the other. I cannot therefore bind my conſcience to practiſe the one ſo as utterly to renounce the other; but I would practiſe either of them as my reaſon and other circumſtances direct me.

Again, I believe that chriſtians ought to remember the death of Chriſt by the ſymbols of bread and wine; and I believe there ought to be paſtors in a chriſtian church ſome way ordained or ſet apart to lead the worſhip, and to bleſs and diſtribute the laſt of theſe elements; but the laſt of theſe practices is not ſo expreſsly directed, preſcribed, and required in ſcripture as the former; and therefore I feel my conſcience evidently bound to remember the death of Chriſt with ſome ſociety of chriſtians or other, ſince it is a moſt plain command, though their methods of ordaining a paſtor be very different from other men, or from my own opinion; or whether the perſon who diſtributes theſe elements be only an occaſional or a ſettled adminiſtrator; ſince none of theſe things are plainly determined in ſcripture. I muſt not omit or neglect an expreſs command, becauſe ſome unneceſſary circumſtances are dubious. And I truſt I ſhall receive approbation from the God of nature, and from Jeſus my judge at the laſt day, if I have endeavoured in this manner to believe and practiſe every thing in proportion to the degree of evidence which God has given me about it, or which he has put me into a capacity to ſeek and obtain in the age and nation wherein I live.

Query, Whether the obſtinate Deiſts, and the fataliſts of Great Britain, will find ſufficient apology from this principle? but I believe them to venture the awful experiment.

XXVI. We may obſerve theſe three rules, in judging of probabilities which are to be determined by reaſon, relating either to things paſt, or things to come.

1. That which agrees moſt with the conſtitution of nature carries the greateſt probability in it, where no other circumſtance appears to counterpoiſe it; as if I let looſe a greyhound within ſight of a hare upon a large plain, there is great probability the greyhound will ſeize her; that a thouſand ſparrows will fly away at the ſight of a hawk among them.

2. That which is moſt conformable to the conſtant obſervations of men, or to experiments frequently repeated, is moſt likely to be true; as, that a winter will not paſs away in England without ſome froſt and ſnow; that if you deal out great quantities of ſtrong liquor to the mob, there will be many drunk; that a large aſſembly of men will be of different opinions in any doubtful point; that a thief will make his eſcape out of priſon, if the doors of it are unguarded at midnight.

3. In matters of fact, which are paſt or preſent, where neither nature, nor obſervation, nor cuſtom gives us any

ſufficient information on either ſide of the queſtion, that we may derive a probability from the atteſtation of wiſe and honeſt men by word or writing, or the concuring witneſſes of multitudes who have ſeen and known what they relate, &c. This teſtimony in many caſes will ariſe to the degree of moral certainty. So we believe that the plant Tea grows in *China*; and that the emperor of the Turks lives at *Conſtantinople*; that JULIUS CÆSAR conquered *France*, and that JESUS our Saviour lived and died in *Judea*; that thouſands were converted to the chriſtian faith in a century after the death of CHRIST; and that the books which contain the chriſtian religion, are certain hiſtories and epiſtles which were written above a thouſand years ago. There is an infinite variety of ſuch propoſitions which can admit of no reaſonable doubt, though they are not matters which are directly evident to our own ſenſes, or our mere reaſoning powers.

XXVII. WHEN a point hath been well examined, and our own judgment ſettled upon juſt arguments in our manly age, and after a large ſurvey of the merits of the cauſe, it would be a weakneſs for us always to continue fluttering in ſuſpenſe. We ought therefore to ſtand firm in ſuch well eſtabliſhed principles, and not be tempted to change and alter for the ſake of every difficulty, or every occaſional objection. We are not to be carried about with every flying doctrine, like children toſſed to and fro, and wavering with the wind. It is a good thing to have the heart eſtabliſhed with grace, not with meats; that is, in the great doctrines of the goſpel of grace, and in JESUS CHRIST, who is the ſame yeſterday, to day, and for ever; but it is not ſo neceſſary in the more minute matters of religion, ſuch as meats and drinks, forms and ceremonies, which are of leſs importance, and for which ſcripture has not given ſuch expreſs directions. This is the advice of the great Apoſtle, Epheſians iv. 14. Hebrews xiii. 8, 9. In ſhort, thoſe truths which are the ſprings of daily practice, ſhould be ſettled as ſoon as we can with the exerciſe of our beſt powers, after the ſtate of manhood; but thoſe things wherein we may poſſibly miſtake, ſhould never be abſolutely and finally eſtabliſhed and determined, as though we were infallible. If the Papiſts of *Great Britain* had indulged ſuch a reſolute eſtabliſhment and aſſurance in the days of king HENRY the VIII. or queen ELIZABETH, there never had been a reformation; nor would any heathen have been converted even under the miniſtry of St. PAUL, if their obſtinate ſettlement in their idolatries had kept their eyes ſhut againſt all further light. Yet this ſhould not hinder us from ſettling our moſt important principles of faith and practice, where reaſon ſhines with its cleareſt evidence, and the word of God plainly determines truth and duty.

XXVIII. But let us remember alſo, that though the goſpel be an infallible revelation, we are but fallible interpreters, when we determine the ſenſe even of ſome important propoſitions written there; and therefore though we ſeem to be eſtabliſhed in the belief of any particular ſenſe of ſcripture, and though there may be juſt calls of providence to profeſs and ſubſcribe it, yet there is no need that we ſhould reſolve or promiſe, ſubſcribe or ſwear, never to change our mind; ſince it is poſſible in the nature and courſe of things, we may meet with ſuch a ſolid and ſubſtantial objection, as may give us a quite different view of things from what we once imagined, and may lay before us ſufficient evidence of the contrary. We may happen to find a fairer light caſt over the ſame ſcriptures, and ſee reaſon to alter our ſentiments even in ſome points of moment. *Sic ſentio, ſic ſentiam*, i. e. *So I believe, and ſo I will believe*, is the priſon of the ſoul for life time, and a bar againſt all the improvements of the mind. To impoſe ſuch a profeſſion on other men in matters not abſolutely neceſſary, and not abſolutely certain, is a criminal uſurpation and tyranny over faith and conſcience, and none has power to require it but an infallible dictator.

CHAP. XIX.

Of inquiring into Cauſes and Effects.

SOME effects are found out by their cauſes, and ſome cauſes by their effect. Let us conſider both theſe.

I. WHEN we are inquiring into the cauſes of any particular effects or appearance, either in the world of nature, or in the civil or moral concerns of men, we may follow this method.

1. Conſider what effects or appearances you have known of a kindred nature, and what have been the certain and real

cauſes of them; for like effects have generally like cauſes, eſpecially when they are found in the ſame ſort of ſubjects.

2. Conſider what are the ſeveral poſſible cauſes which may produce ſuch an effect; and find out by ſome circumſtances, how many of thoſe poſſible cauſes are excluded in this particular caſe; thence proceed by degrees to the probable cauſes, till a more cloſe attention and inſpection ſhall exclude ſome of them alſo, and lead you gradually to the real and certain cauſe.

3. Conſider what things proceeded ſuch an event or appearance, which might have any influence upon it; and though we cannot certainly determine the cauſe of any thing only from its going before the effect, yet among the many forerunners, we may probably light upon the true cauſe by further and more particular inquiry.

4. Conſider whether one cauſe be ſufficient to produce the effect, or whether it does not require a concurrence of ſeveral cauſes; and then endeavour as far as poſſible to adjuſt the degrees of influence that each cauſe might have in producing the effect, and the proper agency and intereſt of each of them therein.

So in natural philoſophy, if I would find what are the principles or cauſes of that ſenſation which we call heat when I ſtand near the fire; here I ſhall find it is neceſſary that there be an agency of the particles of fire on my fleſh, either mediately by themſelves, or at leaſt by the intermediate air; there muſt be a particular ſort of motion and vellication impreſt upon my nerves; there muſt be a derivation of that motion of the brain; and there muſt be an attention of my ſoul to this motion; if either of theſe are wanting, the ſenſation of heat will not be produced.

So in the moral world, if I inquire into the revolution of a ſtate or kingdom, perhaps I find it brought about by the tyranny or folly of a prince, or by the diſaffection of his own ſubjects; and this diſaffection and oppoſition may ariſe; either upon the account of impoſitions in religion, or injuries relating to their civil rights; or the revolution may be effected by the invaſion of a foreign army, or by the oppoſition of ſome perſon at home or abroad that lays claim to the government, &c. or a hero who would guard the liberties of the people; or by many of theſe concurring together; then we muſt adjuſt

juſt the influences of each as wiſely as we can, and not aſcribe the whole event to one of them alone.

II. WHEN we are inquiring into the effects of any particular cauſe or cauſes, we may follow this method.

1. Conſider diligently the nature of every cauſe apart, and obſerve what effect every part or property of it will tend to produce.

2. Conſider the cauſes united together in their ſeveral natures, and ways of operation; inquire how far the powers or properties of one will hinder or promote the effects of the other, and wiſely balance the proportions of their influence.

3. Conſider what the ſubject is, in or upon which the cauſe is to operate; for the ſame cauſe on different ſubjects will oftentimes produce different effects, as the ſun which ſoftens wax will harden clay.

4. Be frequent and diligent in making all proper experiments, in ſetting ſuch cauſes at work whoſe effects you deſire to know, and putting together in an orderly manner ſuch things as are moſt likely to produce ſome uſeful effects, according to the beſt ſurvey you can take of all the concurring cauſes and circumſtances.

5. Obſerve carefully all the events which happen either by an occaſional concurrence of various cauſes, or by the induſtrious application of knowing men; and when you ſee any happy effect certainly produced, and often repeated, treaſure it up, together with the known cauſes of it, amongſt your improvements.

6. Take a juſt ſurvey of all the circumſtances which attend the opperation of any cauſe or cauſes, whereby any ſpecial effect is produced, and find out as far as poſſible how far any of thoſe circumſtances had a tendency either to obſtruct, or promote, or change thoſe operations, and conſequently how far the effect might be influenced by them.

In this manner phyſicians practiſe and improve their ſkill. They conſider the various known effects of particular herbs or drugs, they meditate what will be the effect of their compoſition, and whether the virtues of the one will exalt or diminiſh the force of the other, or correct any of its nocent qualities. Then they obſerve the native conſtitution, and the preſent temper or circumſtances of the patient, and what is likely to be the effect of ſuch a medicine on ſuch a patient.

And in all uncommon caſes they make wiſe and cautious experiments, and nicely obſerve the effects of particular compound medicines on different conſtitutions, and in different diſeaſes; and by theſe treaſuries of juſt obſervations, they grow up to an honourable degree of ſkill in the art of healing.

So the preacher conſiders the doctrines and reaſons, the precepts, the promiſes, and threatenings of the word of God, and what are the natural effects of them upon the mind; he conſiders what is the natural tendency of ſuch a virtue or ſuch a vice; he is well apprized that the repreſentation of ſome of theſe things may convince the underſtanding, ſome may terrify the conſcience, ſome may allure the ſlothful, and ſome encourage the deſponding mind; he obſerves the temper of his hearers, or of any particular perſon that converſes with him about things ſacred, and he judges what will be the effects of each repreſentation on ſuch perſons; he reviews and recollects what have been the effects of ſome ſpecial parts and methods of his miniſtry; and by a careful ſurvey of all theſe, he attains greater degrees of ſkill in his ſacred employment.

Note, In all theſe caſes we muſt diſtinguiſh thoſe cauſes and effects which are naturally and neceſſarily connected with each other, from thoſe which have only an accidental or contingent connexion. Even in thoſe cauſes where the effect is but contingent, we may ſometimes arrive at a very high degree of probability; yet we cannot arrive at ſuch certainty as where the cauſes operate by an evident and natural neceſſity, and the effects neceſſarily follow the operation.

See more on this ſubject, Logic, part II. chap. V. ſect. 7. Of the principles and rules of judging concerning things paſt, preſent and to come, by the mere uſe of reaſon.

CHAP. XX.

Of the Sciences, and their Uſe or particular Profeſſions.

I.

THE beſt way to learn any ſcience, is to begin with a regular ſyſtem, or a ſhort and plain ſcheme of that ſcience, well drawn up into a narrow compaſs; omitting the deeper and more abſtruſe parts of it, and that alſo under the conduct and inſtruction of ſome ſkilful teacher. Syſtems are neceſſary to give an entire and comprehenſive view of the ſeveral parts of any ſcience, which may have a mutual influence toward the explication or proof of each other; whereas if a man deals always and only in eſſays and diſcourſes on particular parts of a ſcience, he will never obtain a diſtinct and juſt idea of the whole, and may perhaps omit ſome important part of it after ſeven years reading of ſuch occaſional diſcourſes.

For this reaſon, young ſtudents ſhould apply themſelves to their ſyſtems much more than pamphlets. That man is never ſo fit to judge of particular ſubjects relating to any ſcience, who has never taken a ſurvey of the whole.

It is the remark of an ingenious writer, ſhould a barbarous Indian, who had never ſeen a palace or a ſhip, view their ſeparate and disjointed parts, and obſerve the pillars, doors, windows, cornices, and turrets of the one, or the prow and ſtern, the ribs and maſts, the ropes and ſhrouds, the ſails and tackle of the other, he would be able to form but a very lame and dark idea of either of thoſe excellent and uſeful inventions. In like manner, thoſe who contemplate only the fragments or pieces broken off from any ſcience, diſperſed in ſhort unconnected diſcourſes, and do not diſcern their relation to each other, and how they may be adapted, and by their union procure the delightful ſymmetry of a regular ſcheme, can never ſurvey an entire body of truth, but muſt always view it as deformed and diſmembered; while their ideas, which muſt be ever indiſtinct and often repugnant, will lie in the brain unſorted, and thrown together without order or coherence; ſuch is the knowledge of thoſe men who live upon the ſcraps of the ſ

A youth of genius and lively imagination, of an active and forward ſpirit, may form within himſelf ſome alluring ſcenes and pleaſing ſchemes in the beginning of a ſcience, which are utterly inconſiſtent with ſome of the neceſſary and ſubſtantial parts of it which appear in the middle or the end. And if he never read and paſs through the whole, he takes up and is ſatisfied with his own haſty pleaſing ſchemes, and treaſures theſe errours up amongſt his ſolid acquiſitions; whereas his own labour and ſtudy farther purſued would have ſhewn him his early miſtakes, and cured him of his ſelf flattering deluſions.

Hence it comes to paſs, that we have ſo many half ſcholars now a days, and there is ſo much confuſion and inconſiſtency in the notions and opinions of ſome perſons, becauſe they devote their hours of ſtudy entirely to ſhort eſſays and pamphlets, and caſt contempt upon ſyſtems, under a pretence of greater politeneſs; whereas the true reaſon of this contempt of ſyſtematical learning, is mere lazineſs and want of judgment.

II. After we are grown well acquainted with a ſhort ſyſtem or compendium of a ſcience, which is written in the plaineſt and moſt ſimple manner, it is then proper to read a larger regular treatiſe on that ſubject, if we deſign a complete knowledge and cultivation of it; and either while we are reading this larger ſyſtem, or after we have done it, the occaſional diſcourſes and eſſays upon the particular ſubjects and parts of that ſcience, may be read with the greateſt profit; for in theſe eſſays we may often find very conſiderable corrections and improvements of what theſe compends, or even the larger ſyſtems may have taught us, mingled with ſome miſtakes.

And theſe corrections or improvements ſhould be as remarks adjoined by way of note or commentary in their proper places and ſuperadded to the regular treatiſe we have read. Then a ſtudious and judicious review of the whole will give us a tolerable acquaintance with that ſcience.

III. It is a great happineſs to have ſuch a tutor, or ſuch friends and companions at hand, who are able to inform us what are the beſt books written on any ſcience, or any ſpecial part of it. For want of this advantage many a man has waſted his time in reading over perhaps ſome whole volumes, and learnt little more by it than to know, that thoſe volumes were not worth his reading.

As for the languages, they are certainly beſt learned in the younger years of life. The memory is then moſt empty and unfurniſhed, and ready to receive new ideas continually. We find that children in two years time after they are born, learn to ſpeak their native tongue.

V. The more abſtracted ſciences, which depend more upon the underſtanding and judgment, and which deal much in abſtracted ideas, ſhould not be impoſed upon children too ſoon; ſuch are logic, metaphyſics, ethics, politics, or the depths and difficulties of grammar and criticiſm. Yet it muſt be confeſſed, the firſt rudiments of grammar are neceſſary, or at leaſt very convenient to be known when a youth learns a new language; and ſome general eaſy principles and rules of morality and divinity are needful, in order to teach child his duty to God and man; but to enter far into abſtracted reaſonings on theſe ſubjects is beyond the capacity of children.

VI. There are ſeveral of the ſciences that will more agreeably employ our younger years, and the general parts of them may be eaſily taken in by boys. The firſt principles and eaſier practices of arithmetic, geometry, plain trigonometry, meaſuring heights, depths, lengths, diſtances, &c. The rudiments of geography and aſtronomy, together with ſomething of mechanics, may be eaſily conveyed into the minds of acute young perſons, from nine or ten years old and upward. Theſe ſtudies may be entertaining and uſeful to young ladies as well as to gentlemen, and to all thoſe who are bred up to the learned profeſſions. The fair ſex may intermingle thoſe with the operations of the needle, and the knowledge of domeſtic life. Boys may be taught to join them with their rudiments of grammar, and their labour in the languages. And even thoſe who never learn any language but their mother tongue,, may be taught theſe ſciences with laſting benefit in early days.

That this may be done with eaſe and advantage, take theſe three reaſons.

1. Becauſe they depend ſo much upon ſchemes and numbers, images, lines, and figures, and ſenſible things, that the imagination or fancy will greatly aſſiſt the underſtanding, and render the knowledge of them much more eaſy.

2. Theſe ſtudies are ſo pleaſant, that they will make the dry labour of learning words, phraſes, and languages more tolrable to boys in a Latin ſchool by this moſt agreeable mixture.

ture. The employment of youth in theſe ſtudies will tempt them to neglect many of the fooliſh plays of childhood, and they will find ſweeter entertainment for themſelves and their leiſure hours, by a cultivation of theſe pretty pieces of alluring knowledge.

3. The knowledge of theſe parts of ſcience are both eaſy and worthy to be retained in memory by all children when they come to manly years, for they are uſeful through all the parts of human life; they tend to enlarge the underſtanding early, and to give a various acquaintance with uſeful ſubjects by times. And ſurely it is beſt, as far as poſſible, to train up children in the knowledge of thoſe things which they ſhould never forget, rather than to let them waſte years of life in trifles, or in hard words which are not worth remembering.

And here by the way I cannot but wonder, that any author in our age ſhould have attempted to teach any of the exploded phyſics of DESCARTES, or the nobler inventions of Sir ISAAC NEWTON, in his hypotheſis of the heavenly bodies and their motions, in his doctrine of light and colours, and other parts of his phyſiology, or to inſtruct children in the knowledge of the theory of the heavens, earth, and planets, without any figures or diagrams. Is it poſſible to give a boy or a young lady the clear, diſtinct, and proper apprehenſions of theſe things, without lines and figures to deſcribe them? Does not their underſtanding want the aid of fancy and images to convey ſtronger and juſter ideas of them to the inmoſt ſoul; or do they imagine that youth can penetrate into all theſe beauties and artifices of nature without theſe helps which perſons of maturer age find neceſſary for that purpoſe? I would not willingly name the books, becauſe ſome of the writers are ſaid to be gentlemen of excellent acquirements.

VII. AFTER we have firſt learnt and gone through any of thoſe arts or ſciences which are to be explained by diagrams, figures, and ſchemes, ſuch as geometry, geography, aſtronomy, optics, mechanics, &c. we may beſt preſerve them in memory, by having thoſe ſchemes and figures in large ſheets of paper, hanging always before the eye in cloſets, parlours, halls, chambers, entries, ſtair caſes &c. Thus the learned images will be perpetually impreſt on the brain, and will keep the learning that depends upon them alive and freſh in the mind through the growing years of life; the mere diagrams and figures will ever recal to our thoughts thoſe theorems, problems, and corollaries, which have been demonſtrated by them.

It is incredible how much geography may be learnt this way by the two terreſtrial hemiſpheres, and by particular maps and charts of the coaſts and countries of the earth, happily diſpoſed round about us. Thus we may learn alſo the conſtellations, by juſt projections of the celeſtial ſphere, hung up in the ſame manner. And I muſt confeſs, for the bulk of learners of aſtronomy, I like that projection of the ſtars beſt, which includes in it all the ſtars in our horizon, and therefore it reaches to thirty eight and a half degree of ſouthern latitude, though its center is the north pole. This gives us a better view of the heavenly bodies, as they appear every night to us, and it may be made uſe of with a little inſtruction, and with eaſe, to ſerve for a nocturnal, and ſhew the true hour of the night.

But remember, if there be any colouring upon theſe maps or projections, it ſhould be laid on ſo thin, as not to obſcure or conceal any part of the lines, figures, or letters. Whereas moſt times they are daubed ſo thick with gay and glaring colours and hung up ſo high above the reach of the eye that ſhould ſurvey and read them, as though their only deſign were to make a gaudy ſhow upon the wall, and they hung there merely to cover the naked plaſter or wainſcot.

Thoſe ſciences, which may be drawn out into tables, may alſo be thus hung up and diſpoſed in proper places, ſuch as brief abſtracts of hiſtory, chronology &c. and indeed the ſchemes of any of the arts or ſciences may be analyſed in a ſort of ſkeleton, and repreſented upon tables, with the various dependencies and connexions of their ſeveral parts and ſubjects that belong to them. Mr. SOLOMAN LOWE has happily thrown the grammar of ſeveral languages into ſuch tables; and a frequent review of theſe abſtracts and epitomes would tend much to imprint them on the brain, when they have been once well learned. This would keep thoſe learned traces always open, and aſſiſt the weakneſs of a labouring memory. In this manner may a ſcheme of the ſcipture hiſtory be drawn out, and perpetuate thoſe ideas in the mind with which our daily reading furniſhes us.

VIII. Every man who pretends to the character of a ſcholar, ſhould attain ſome general and ſuperficial idea of moſt or all the ſciences; for their is a certain connexion among the various parts of human knowledge, ſo that ſome notions borrowed from any one ſcience may aſſiſt our acquaintance with any other, either by way of explication, illuſtration, or proof. Though there are ſome ſciences conjoined by a much nearer affinity than others.

IX. Let thoſe parts of every ſcience be chiefly ſtudied at firſt, and reviewed afterward, which have a more direct tendency to aſſiſt our proper profeſſion, as men, or our general profeſſion, as chriſtians, always obſerving what we ourſelves have found moſt neceſſary and uſeful to us in the courſe of our lives, age and experience will teach us to judge which of the ſciences, and which parts of them, have been of greateſt uſe, and are moſt valuable; but in younger years of life we are not ſufficient judges of this matter, and therefore ſhould ſeek advice from others who are elder.

X. There are three learned profeſſions among us, viz. divinity, law, and medicine. Though every man who pretends to be a ſcholar or a gentleman ſhould ſo far acquaint himſelf with a ſuperficial ſcheme of all the ſciences, as not to ſtand amazed like a mere ſtranger at the mention of the common ſubjects that belong to them; yet there is no neceſſity for every man of learning to enter into their difficulties and deep receſſes, nor to climb the heights to which ſome others have arrived. The knowledge of them in a proper meaſure may be happily uſeful to every profeſſion, not only becauſe all arts and ſciences have a ſort of communion and connexion with each other, but it is an angelic pleaſure to grow in knowledge, it is a matter of honour and eſteem, and renders a man more agreeable and acceptable in every company.

But let us ſurvey ſeveral of them more particularly, with regard to the learned profeſſions. And firſt of the mathematics.

XI. Though I have ſo often commended mathematical ſtudies, and particularly the ſpeculations of arithmetic and geometry, as a means to fix a wavering mind, to beget an habit of attention, and to improve the faculty of reaſon; yet I would by no means be underſtood to recommend to all a purſuit of theſe ſciences, to thoſe extenſive lengths to which the moderns have advanced them. This is neither neceſſary nor proper for any ſtudents, but thoſe few who ſhall make theſe ſtudies their chief profeſſion and buſineſs of life, or thoſe gentlemen whoſe capacities and turn of mind are ſuited to theſe ſtudies, and have all manner of advantages to improve in them.

The general principles of arithmetic, algebra, geometry, and trigonometry, of geography of modern aſtronomy, ſtatics, and optics, have their valuable and excellent uſes, not only for the exerciſe and improvement of the faculties of the mind, but the ſubjects themſelves are very well worth our knowledge in a moderate degree, and are often made of admirable ſervice in human life. So much of theſe ſubjects as Dr. WELLS has given us in his three volumes, entitled, The Young Gentleman's Mathematics, is richly ſufficient for the greateſt part of ſcholars or gentlemen; though perhaps there may be ſome ſingle treatiſes, at leaſt on ſome of theſe ſubjects, which may be better written and more uſeful to be peruſed than thoſe of that learned author.

But a penetration into the abſtruſe difficulties and depths of modern algebra and fluxions, the various methods of quadratures, the menſuration of all manner of curves, and their mutual transformation, and twenty other things that ſome modern mathematicians deal in, are not worth the labour of thoſe who deſign either of the three learned profeſſions, divinity, law, or phyſic, as the buſineſs of life. This is the ſentence of a conſiderable man, viz. Dr. GEORGE CHEYNE, who was a very good proficient and writer on theſe ſubjects; he affirms that they are but barren and airy ſtudies for a man entirely to live upon, and that for a man to indulge and riot in theſe exquiſitely bewitching contemplations, is only proper for public profeſſors, or for gentlemen of eſtates, who have a ſtrong propenſity this way, and a genius fit to cultivate them.

But, ſays he, to own a great but grievous truth, though they may quicken and ſharpen the invention, ſtrengthen and extend the imagination, improve and refine the reaſoning faculty, and are of uſe both in the neceſſary and the luxurious refinement of mechanical arts; yet having no tendency to rectify the will, to ſweeten the temper, or mend the heart, they often leave a ſtiffneſs, a poſitiveneſs and ſufficiency on weak minds, which is much more pernicious to ſociety, and to the intereſts of the great end of our being, than all their advantages can recompence. He adds further, concerning the launching into the depth of theſe ſtudies, that they are apt to beget a ſecret and refined pride, and over weening and over bearing vanity, the moſt oppoſite temper to the true ſpirit of the goſpel. This tempts them to preſume on a kind of omniſcience in reſpect to their fellow creatures, who have not riſen to their elevation; nor are they fit to be truſted in the hands of any but thoſe who have acquired a humble heart, a lowly ſpirit, and a ſober and teachable temper. See Dr. CHEYNE's preface to his eſſay on health and long life.

XII. SOME of the practical parts of geometry, aſtronomy, dialing, optics, ſtatics, mechanics, &c. may be agreeable entertainments and amuſements to ſtudents in every profeſſion at leiſure hours, if they enjoy ſuch circumſtances of life as to furniſh them with conveniences for this ſort of improvement: but let them take great care leſt they entrench upon more neceſſary employments, and ſo fall under the charge and cenſure of waiſted time.

Yet I cannot help making this obſervation, that where ſtudents, or indeed any young gentlemen, have in their early years made themſelves maſters of a variety of elegant problems in the mathematic circle of knowledge, and gained the moſt eaſy, neat, and entertaining experiments in natural philoſophy, with ſome ſhort and agreeable ſpeculations or practices in any other of the arts or ſciences, they have hereby laid a foundation for the eſteem and love of mankind among thoſe with whom they converſe, in higher or lower ranks of life; they have been often guarded by theſe means from the temptation of nocent pleaſures, and have ſecured both their own hours and the hours of their companions from running to waſte in ſauntering and trifles, and from a thouſand impertinences in ſilly dialogues. Gaming and drinking, and many criminal and fooliſh ſcenes of talk and action, have been prevented by theſe innocent and improving elegancies of knowledge.

XIII. HISTORY is a neceſſary ſtudy in the ſupreme place for gentlemen who deal in politics. The government of nations, and diſtreſsful and deſolating events which have in all ages attended the miſtakes of politicians, ſhould be ever preſent on their minds, to warn them to avoid the like conduct. Geography and chronology, which preciſely informs us of the place and time where ſuch tranſactions or events happened, are the eyes of hiſtory, and of abſolute neceſſity in ſome meaſure to attend it.

But hiſtory, ſo far as relates to the affairs of the bible, is as neceſſary to divines as to gentlemen of any profeſſion. It helps us to reconcile many difficulties in ſcripture, and demonſtrates a divine providence. Dr. PRIDEAUX's connexion of the Old and New Teſtament is an excellent treatiſe of this kind.

XIV. AMONG the ſmaller hiſtories, biography, or the memoirs of the lives of great and good men, has a high rank in my eſteem, as worthy of the peruſal of every perſon who devotes himſelf to the ſtudy of divinity. Therein we frequently find our holy religion reduced to practice, and many parts of chriſtianity ſhining with a tranſcendent and exemplary light. We learn there how deeply ſenſible great and good men have been of the ruins of human nature by the firſt apoſtacy from God, and how they have toiled and laboured, and turned themſelves on all ſides, to ſeek a recovery in vain, till they have found the goſpel of Chriſt an all ſufficient relief. We are there furniſhed with effectual and unanſwerable evidences that the religion of Jeſus, with all its ſelf denials, virtues, and devotions, is a very practicable thing ſince it has been carried to ſuch a degree of honour by ſome wiſe and holy men. We have been there aſſured, that the pleaſures and ſatisfactions of the chriſtian life, in its preſent practice and its future hopes, are not the mere raptures of fancy and enthuſiaſm, when ſome of the ſtricteſt profeſſors of reaſon have added the ſanction of their teſtimony.

In ſhort, the lives or memoirs of perſons of piety well written, have been of infinite and unſpeakable advantage to the diſciples and profeſſors of chriſtianity, and have given us admirable inſtances and rules how to reſiſt every temptation of a ſoothing or a frowning world, how to practiſe important and difficult duties, how to love God above all, and to love our neighbours as ourſelves, to live by faith of the Son of God, and to die in the ſame faith, in ſure and certain hope of a reſurrection of eternal life.

XV. REMEMBER that logic and ontology or metaphyſics are neceſſary ſciences, though they have been greatly abuſed by ſcholaſtic writers who have profeſſed to teach them in former ages. Not only all ſtudents, whether they deſign the profeſſion of theology, law, or phyſic, but all gentlemen, ſhould at leaſt acquire a ſuperficial knowledge of them. The introduction of ſo many ſubtilties, nice diſtinctions, and inſignificant terms without clear ideas, has brought a great part of the logic and metaphyſics of the ſchools into juſt contempt. Their logic has appeared the mere art of wrangling, and their metaphyſics the ſkill of ſplitting an hair, of diſtinguiſhing without a difference, and of putting long hard names upon common things, and ſometimes upon a confuſed jumble of things which have no clear ideas belonging to them.

It is certain that an unknown heap of trifles and impertinencies have been intermingled with theſe uſeful parts of learning, upon which account many perſons in this polite age have made it a part of their breeding to throw a jeſt upon them; and to rally them well, has been eſteemed a more valuable talent than to underſtand them.

But this is running into wide extremes; nor ought theſe parts of ſcience to be abandoned by the wiſe, becauſe ſome writers of former ages have played the fool with them. True logic teaches us to uſe our reaſon well, and brings a light into the underſtanding; true mataphyſics or ontology, caſts a light upon all the objects of thought and meditation, by ranging every being with all the abſolute and relative perfections and properties, modes and attendants of it in proper ranks or claſſes, and thereby it diſcovers the various relations of things to each other, and what are their general or ſpecial difference from each other, wherein a great part of human knowledge conſiſts. And by this mean it greatly conduces to inſtruct us in method, or the diſpoſition of every thing into its proper rank and claſs of beings, attributes, or actions.

XVI. If I were to ſay any thing of natural philoſophy, I would venture to lay down my ſentiments thus.

I think it muſt needs be very uſeful to a divine to underſtand ſomething of natural ſcience. The mere natural hiſtory of birds, beaſts, and fiſhes, of inſects, trees, and plants, as well as of meteors, ſuch as clouds, thunders, lightnings, ſnow, hail, froſt, &c. in all their common or uncommon appearances, may be of conſiderable uſe to one who ſtudies divinity, to give him a wider and more delightful view of the works of God, and to furniſh him with lively and happy images and metaphors drawn from the large volume of nature, to diſplay and repreſent the things of God and religion in the moſt beautiful and affecting colours.

And if the mere hiſtory of theſe things be uſeful for this purpoſe, ſurely it will be of further advantage to be led into the reaſons, cauſes, and effects of theſe natural objects and appearances, and to know the eſtabliſhed laws of nature, matter, and motion, whereby the great God carries on his extenſive works of providence from the creation to this day.

I confeſs the old *Ariſtotelean* ſcheme of this ſcience will teach us very little that is worth the knowing about theſe matters; but the later writers, who have explained nature and its operations in a more ſenſible and geometrical manner, are well worth the moderate ſtudy of a divine; eſpecially thoſe who have followed the principles of that wonder of our age and nations, Sir ISAAC NEWTON. There is much pleaſure and entertainment, as well as real profit, to be derived from thoſe admirable improvements which have been advanced in natural philoſophy in late years by the aſſiſtance of mathematical learning, as well as from the multitude of experiments which have been made, and are ſtill making, in natural ſubjects.

XVII. THIS is a ſcience which indeed eminently belongs to the phyſician; he ought to know all the parts of human nature, what are the ſound and healthy functions of an animal body, and what are the diſtempers and dangers which attend it; he ſhould alſo be furniſhed with a large knowledge of plants and minerals, and every thing which makes up the *materia medica*, or the ingredients of which medicines are made; and many other things in natural philoſophy are ſubſervient to his profeſſion, as well as to the kindred art of ſurgery.

XVIII. QUESTIONS about the powers and operations of nature may alſo ſometimes come into the lawyer's cognizance, eſpecially ſuch as relate to aſſaults, wounds, murders, &c. I remember I have read a trial of a man for murder by drowning, wherein the judge on the bench heard ſeveral arguments concerning the lungs being filled or not filled with water, by inſpiration or expiration, &c. to all which he profeſſed himſelf ſo much a ſtranger, as did not do him any great honour in public.

XIX. BUT I think no divine, who can obtain it, ſhould be utterly deſtitute of this knowledge. By the aſſiſtance of this ſtudy, he will be better able to ſurvey the various monuments of creating wiſdom in the heavens, the earth, and the ſeas, with wonder and worſhip; and by the uſe of a moderate ſkill in this ſcience, he may communicate ſo much of the aſtoniſhing works of God in the formation and government of this viſible world, and ſo far inſtruct many of his hearers, as may aſſiſt the transfuſion of the ſame ideas into their minds, and raiſe them to the ſame delightful exerciſes of devotion. 'O Lord, how manifold are thy works? In wiſdom haſt thou made them all! They are ſought out by all that have pleaſure in them.'

Beſides, it is worthy of the notice of every ſtudent in theology, that he ought to have ſome acquaintance with the principles of nature, that he may judge a little how far they will go; ſo that he may not be impoſed upon to take every ſtrange appearance in nature for a miracle, that he may reaſon the clearer upon this ſubject, that he may better confirm the miracles of MOSES and of CHRIST, nor yield up his faith to any pretences of prodigy and wonder, which are either the occaſional and uncommon operations of the elements, or the crafty ſleights of men well ſkilled in philoſophy and mechanical operations to declude the ſimple.

XX. THE knowledge alſo of animal nature, and of the rational ſoul of man, and the mutual influence of theſe two ingredients of our compoſition upon each other, is worthy the ſtudy of a divine. It is of great importance to perſons of this character and office, to judge how far the animal powers have influence upon ſuch and ſuch particular appearances and practices of mankind; how far the appetites or paſſions of human nature are owing to the fleſh and blood, or to the mind; how far they may be moderated, and how far they ought to be ſubdued; and what are the happieſt methods of obtaining theſe ends. By this ſcience alſo we may be better informed, how far theſe paſſions or appetites are lawful, and how far they are criminal, by conſidering how far they are ſubject to the power of the will, and how far they may be changed and corrected by our watchfulneſs, care, and diligence.

It comes alſo very properly under the cognizance of this profeſſion, to be able in ſome meaſure to determine queſtions which may ariſe relating to real inſpiration or prophecy, to wild enthuſiaſm, to fits of a convulſive kind, to melancholy or phrenzy, &c. and what directions are proper to be given concerning any appearances of this nature.

XXI. NEXT to the knowledge of natural things, and acquaintance with the human nature and conſtitution, which is made up of ſoul and body, I think natural religion properly takes its place. This conſiſts of theſe two parts, viz. 1. The ſpeculative or contemplative, which is the knowledge of God in his various perfections, and in his relations to his rational creatures, ſo far as may be known by the light of nature, which heretofore uſed to be called the ſecond part of the metaphyſics. It includes alſo, 2. That which is practical or active, which is the knowledge of the ſeveral duties which ariſe from our relation to God, and our relation to our fellow creatures, and the proper conduct and government of ourſelves; this has been uſed to be called ethics, or moral philoſophy.

XXII. The knowledge of theſe things is proper for all men of learning; not only becauſe it teaches them to obtain juſter views of the ſeveral parts of revealed religion and of chriſtianity, which are built upon them, but becauſe every branch of natural religion and of moral duty is contained, and neceſſarily implied, in all the revealed religions that ever God preſcribed to the world. We may well ſuſpect that religion does not come from God which renounces any part of natural duty.

Whether mankind live under the diſpenſation of the patriarchs, or of Moses, or the prophets, or of our Lord Jesus Christ, ſtill we are bound to know the one true God, and to practiſe all that adoration and reverence, all that love to him, that faith in his perfections, with that obedience and ſubmiſſion to his will, which natural religion requires. We are ſtill bound to exerciſe that juſtice, truth, and goodneſs towards our neighbours, that reſtraint and moderation of our own appetites and paſſions, and that regular behaviour towards ourſelves and all our fellow creatures around us, which moral philoſophy teaches. There is no ſort of revealed religion that will diſpenſe with theſe natural obligations; and a happy acquaintance with the ſeveral appetites, inclinations, and paſſions of human nature, and the beſt methods to rule and reſtrain, to direct and govern them, are our conſtant buſineſs, and ought to be our everlaſting ſtudy.

Yet I would lay down this caution, viz. That ſince ſtudents are inſtructed in the knowledge of the true God in their lectures on chriſtianity, and ſince among the chriſtian duties they are alſo taught all the moral dictates of the light of nature, or a complete ſcheme of ethics, there is no abſolute neceſſity of learning theſe two parts of natural religion, as diſtinct ſciences, ſeparate and by themſelves; but ſtill it is of great importance for a tutor, while he is reading to his pupils theſe parts of the chriſtian religion, to give them notice how far the light of nature or mere reaſon will inſtruct us in theſe doctrines and duties, and how far we are obliged to divine revelation and ſcripture, for clearing up and eſtabliſhing the firm foundations of the one, for affording us ſuperiour motives and powers to practiſe the other, for raiſing them to more exalted degrees, and building ſo glorious a ſuperſtructure upon them.

XXIII. The ſtudy of natural religion, viz. the knowledge of God and the rules of virtue and piety, as far as they are diſcovered by the light of nature, is needful indeed to prove the truth of divine revelation or ſcripture, in the moſt effectual manner; but after the divine authority of ſcripture is eſtabliſhed, that will be a very ſufficient ſpring from whence the bulk of mankind may derive their knowledge of divinity, or the chriſtian religion, in order to their own preſent faith and practice, and their future and eternal happineſs. In this ſenſe theology is a ſcience neceſſary for every one that hopes for the favour of God, and the felicity of another world; and it is of infinitely more importance than any of the arts and ſciences which belong to the learned profeſſions here on earth.

XXIV. Perhaps it will be thought neceſſary I ſhould ſay ſomething concerning the ſtudy of the civil law, or the law of nature and nations.

If we would ſpeak with great juſtneſs and propriety, the civil law ſignifies the peculiar law of each ſtate, country, or city; but what we now a days uſually mean by the civil law, is a body of laws compoſed out of the beſt of the Roman and Grecian laws, and which was in the main received and obſerved through all the Roman dominions for above twelve hundred years.

The Romans took the firſt grounds of this law from what they call the twelve tables, which were the abridgments of the laws of Solon at *Athens*, and of other cities in *Greece*, famous for knowledge and wiſdom; to which they added their own ancient cuſtoms of the city of *Rome*, and the laws which were made there. Theſe written laws were ſubject to various interpretations, whence controverſies daily ariſing, they were determined by the judgment of the learned; and theſe determinations were what they firſt called *Jus Civile.* All this by degrees grew to a vaſt number of volumes; and therefore the emperor JUSTINIAN commanded his chancellor TRIBONIAN to reduce them to a perfect body, and this is called the body of the civil law.

XXV. BUT that which is of moſt importance for all learned men to be acquainted with is the law of nature, or the knowledge of right and wrong among mankind, whether it be tranſacted between ſingle perſons or communities, ſo far as common reaſon and the light of nature dictate and direct. This is what PUFFENDORFF calls the law of nature and nations, as will appear if you conſult ſect. 3. chap. III. of the moſt valuable folio he has written on that ſubject; which is well worthy the ſtudy of every man of learning, particularly lawyers and divines, together with other treatiſes on the ſame theme.

If any queſtion propoſed relate to right, and property, and juſtice between man and man, in any polite and civilized country, though it muſt be adjudged chiefly according to the particular ſtatutes and laws of that country, yet the knowledge of the law of nature will very conſiderably aſſiſt the lawyer and the civil judge in the determination thereof. And this knowledge will be of great uſe to divines, not only in deciding of caſes of conſcience among men, and anſwering any difficult inquiries which may be propoſed to them on this ſubject, but it will greatly aſſiſt them alſo in their ſtudies relating to the law of God, and the performance or violation thereof, the nature of duty and ſin, reward and puniſhment.

XXVI. I HAVE ſpoken ſomething of the languages before, but let me here reſume the ſubject, and put in a few thoughts about thoſe ſtudies which are wont to be called philological; ſuch as hiſtory, languages, grammar, rhetoric, poeſy and criticiſm.

An acquaintance with ſome of the learned languages at leaſt, is neceſſary for all the three learned profeſſions.

XXVII. THE lawyers, who have the leaſt need of foreign tongues, ought to underſtand Latin. During many ages paſt, very important matters in the law were always written and managed in that language by the lawyers, as preſcriptions in medicine by the phyſicians, and citations of the ſcriptures in divinity were always made in Latin by the divines. Prayers alſo were ordained to be ſaid publicly and privately in the Roman tongue; *pater noſters* and *ave-marias* were half the devotion of thoſe ages. Theſe cruel impoſitions upon the people would not ſuffer them to read in their own mother tongue what was done, either to or for their own ſouls, their bodies, or their eſtates. I am ready to ſuſpect this was all owing to the craft and policy of the prieſthood and church of *Rome*, which endeavoured to aggrandize themſelves, and exalt their own profeſſion into a ſovereign tyranny, and to make mere ſlaves of the laity among mankind, by keeping them in utter ignorance, darkneſs, and dependence. And they were willing to compound the matter with the phyſicians and the lawyers, and allow them a ſmall ſhare in this tyranny over the populace, to maintain their own ſupreme dominion over all.

But we thank God the world is grown ſomething wiſer; and of late years the Britiſh Parliament has been pleaſed to give relief from that bondage in matters relating to the law alſo, as in the age of the reformation we were delivered from ſaying our prayers in Latin, from being bound to read the word of God in a tongue unknown to the people, and from living in an everlaſting ſubjection to the clergy in matters of this life and the life to come.

But to return; There are ſtill ſo many forms of proceedings in judicature, and things called by Latin names in the profeſſion of the law, and ſo many barbarous words with *Latin* terminations, that it is neceſſary lawyers ſhould underſtand this language. Some acquaintance alſo with the old French tongue is needful for the ſame perſons and profeſſion, ſince the tenures of LYTTLETON, which are a ſort of bible to the gentlemen of the long robe, were written in that language; and this tongue has been interwoven in ſome forms of the Engliſh law, from the days of WILLIAM the Conqueror, who came from *Normandy* in *France*.

XXVIII. PHYSICIANS ſhould be ſkilled in the Greek as well as in the *Latin*, becauſe their great maſter HIPPOCRATES wrote in that tongue, and his writings are ſtill of good value and uſe. A multitude of the names, both of the body, of diſeaſes, and of medicines, are derived from the Greek language; and there are many excellent books of Phyſic, both in the theoretical and practical parts of it, which are delivered to the world in the Roman tongue, and of which that profeſſion ſhould not be ignorant.

XXIX. Such as intend the ſtudy of theology, ſhould be well acquainted alſo with the Latin, becauſe it has been for many hundred years the language of the ſchools of learning; their diſputations are generally limited to that language, and many and excellent books of divinity muſt be entirely concealed from the ſtudents, unleſs they are acquainted with Latin authors.

But thoſe that deſign the ſacred profeſſion of theology, ſhould make it their labour of chief importance to be very converſant with their bibles, both in the Old and New Teſtament; and this requires ſome knowledge of thoſe original languages, Greek and Hebrew, in which the Scriptures were written. All that will purſue theſe ſtudies with honour, ſhould be able to read the Old Teſtament tolerably in the Hebrew tongue; at leaſt they ſhould be ſo far acquainted with it, as to find out the ſenſe of a text by the help of a dictionary. But ſcarce any man ſhould be thought worthy of the name of a ſolid divine, or a ſkilful teacher of the goſpel in theſe days of light and liberty, unleſs he has pretty good knowledge of the Greek, ſince all the important points of the chriſtian religion are derived from the New Teſtament, which was firſt written in that language.

XXX. As for the Syriac and Arabic tongues, if one divine in thirty, or in three hundred, travel far into theſe regions, it is enough. A few learned men ſkilled in theſe languages, will make ſufficient remarks upon them for the ſervice of the whole chriſtian world; which remarks may ſometimes happen to be of uſe to thoſe divines who are unacquainted with them, in reading the bible. But the advantage of theſe tongues is not of ſo great importance as it has been too often repreſented. My reader will agree with me, when he conſiders that the chief uſes of them are theſe.

The Arabic is a language which has ſome kindred and affinity to the Hebrew, and perhaps we may now and then gueſs at the ſenſe of ſome uncommon and doubtful Hebrew word, which is found but once or twice in the bible, by its ſuppoſed affinity to the Arabic. But whatever conjectures may be made by ſome kindred of a Hebrew word to an Arabic root, yet there is no certainty to be gathered from it; for even words of the ſame language, which are undoubtedly derived from the ſame theme or primitive, will give us but very doubtful and ſorry information concerning the true ſenſe of kindred words which ſpring from the ſame theme.

Let me give a plain inſtance or two of this uncertainty. The word *ſtrages* ſignifies *ſlaughter*; *ſtratum* is Latin for a *bed*; *ſtramen* is *ſtraw*. They are all drawn and derived from *ſterno* which ſignifies to *throw down*, to *kill*, or to *ſpread abroad*. Let the critics tell me what certain ſenſe they could put upon either of theſe four words by their mere cognation with each other, or by their derivation from the common verb. Again, who could tell me the certain meaning and preciſe idea of the word *honeſt* in Engliſh, and aſſure me that it ſignifies a *man of integ rity, juſtice, and probity*, though it is evidently derived from *honeſtus* in Latin? for *honeſtus* has a very different idea, and ſignifies *a man of ſome figure in the world*, or *a man of honour*. Let any man judge then how little ſervice towords explaining the Hebrew tongue can be furniſhed from all the language of Arabia. Surely a great part of the long learned fatigues and tireſome travels of men through this country, is almoſt vain and uſeleſs to make the Hebrew bible better underſtood.

As for the Syriac language, it is granted there may be ſome ſmall advantage drawn from the knowledge of it, becauſe there is a very antient tranſlation of the New Teſtament in that tongue; and perhaps this may ſometimes give a proper and oppoſite meaning to a difficult and doubtful text, and offer a fair hint for recovering the true meaning of the ſcripture from the perverſe gloſſes of other writers. But there are ſeveral commentators and lexicographers who have been acquainted with the Syriac language, and have given us the chief of theſe hints in their writings on ſcripture.

After all, ſince none of theſe aſſiſtances can yield us a ſufficient proof of a true interpretation, and give us the certain ſenſe of a text, who would be perſuaded to waſte any great number of his better hours in ſuch dry ſtudies, and in labours of ſo little profit?

XXXI THE Chaldean language indeed is much nearer to the Hebrew, and it is proper for a divine to have ſome acquaintance with it, becauſe there are ſeveral verſes or chapters of EZRA and DANIEL which are written in that language; and the old Jewiſh targums or commentaries, which are written in the Chaldean tongue, may ſometimes happen to caſt a little light upon a doubtful ſcripture of the Old Teſtament.

But it muſt be ſtill owned, that the knowledge of theſe eaſtern tongues does not deſerve to be magnified to ſuch a degree as ſome of the proficients in them have indulged; wherein they have carried matters beyond all reaſon and juſtice, ſince ſcarce any of the moſt important ſubjects of the goſpel of Chriſt and the way of ſalvation can gain any advantage from them.

XXXII. The art of grammar comes now to be mentioned. It is a diſtinct thing from the mere knowledge of the languages; for all mankind are taught from their infancy to ſpeak their mother tongue, by a natural imitation of their mothers and nurſes, and thoſe who are round about them, without any knowledge of the art of grammar, and the various obſervations and rules that relate to it. Grammar indeed is nothing elſe but the rules and obſervations drawn from the common ſpeech of mankind in their ſeveral languages; and it teaches us to ſpeak and pronounce, to ſpell and write with propriety and exactneſs, according to the cuſtom of thoſe, in every nation, who are or were ſuppoſed to ſpeak and write their own language beſt. Now it is a ſhame for a man to pretend to ſcience and ſtudy in any of the three learned profeſſions, who is not in ſome meaſure acquainted with the propriety of thoſe languages with which he ought to be converſant in his daily ſtudies, and more eſpacially in ſuch as he may ſometimes be called upon to write as well as read.

XXXIII. Next to grammar, we proceed to conſider rhetoric.

Now rhetoric in general is the art of perſuading, which may be diſtinguiſhed into theſe three parts, viz. 1. Conveying the ſenſe of the ſpeaker to the underſtanding of the hearers in the cleareſt and moſt intelligible manner, by the plaineſt expreſſions and the moſt lively and ſtriking repreſentations of it, ſo that the mind may be thoroughly convinced of the thing propoſed. 2. Perſuading the will effectually to chuſe or refuſe the thing ſuggeſted and repreſented. 3. Raiſing the paſſions in the moſt lively and forcible manner, ſo as to ſet all the ſoul and every power of nature at work, to purſue or avoid the thing in debate.

To attain this end, there is not only a great deal of art neceſſary to the repreſentation of matters to the auditory, but alſo in the diſpoſition or method of introducing theſe particular repreſentations, together with the reaſons which might convince, and the various methods which might perſuade and prevail upon the hearers. There are cartain ſeaſons wherein a violent torrent of oration, in a diſguiſed and concealed method, may be more effectual than all the nice forms of logic and reaſoning. The figures of interrogation and exclamation have ſometimes a large place and happy effect in this ſort of diſcourſe, and no figure of ſpeech ſhould be wanting here, where the ſpeaker has art enough happily to introduce it.

There are many remarks and rules laid down by the teachers of this art, to improve a young genius into the glorious talents whereby TULLY and DEMOSTHENES acquired that amazing influence and ſucceeſs in their own age and nation, and that immortal fame through all nations and ages. It is with great advantage theſe rules may be peruſed and learned. But a happy genius, a lively imagination, and warm paſſions, together with a due degree of knowledge and ſkill in the ſubject to be debated, and a perpetual peruſal of the writings of the beſt orators, and hearing the beſt ſpeakers, will do more to make an orator, than all the rules of art in the world, without theſe natural talents, and this careful imitation of the moſt approved and happieſt orators.

XXXIV. Now you will preſently ſuppoſe that pleaders at the bar have great need of this art of rhetoric; but it has a juſt doubt, whether pleading in our Britiſh courts of juſtice, before a ſkilful judge, ſhould admit any other aid from rhetoric, than that which teaches to open a cauſe clearly, and ſpread it in the moſt perſpicuous, complete, and impartial manner before the eyes of him that judges; for impartial juſtice being the thing which is ſought, there ſhould be no artifices uſed, no eloquence or powers of language employed to perſuade the will, or work upon the paſſions, leſt the deciſive ſentence of the judge ſhould be biaſſed or warped into injuſtice. For this reaſon, Mr. LOCKE would baniſh all pleaders in the law for fees out of his government of *Carolina*, in his poſthumous works, though perhaps the great man might poſſibly be too ſevere in ſo univerſal a cenſure of the profeſſion.

XXXV. BUT the caſe is very different with regard to divines. The eloquence of the pulpit, beyond all controverſy, has a much larger extent.

Their buſineſs is not to plead a cauſe of right and wrong before a wiſe and ſkilful judge, but to addreſs all the ranks of mankind, the high and the low, the wiſe and the unwiſe, the ſober and the vicious, and purſuade them all to purſue and perſevere in virtue with regard to themſelves, in juſtice and goodneſs with regard to their neighbours, and piety towards God. Theſe are affairs of everlaſting importance, and moſt of the perſons, to whom theſe addreſſes are made, are not wiſe and ſkilful judges, but are influenced and drawn ſtrongly to the contrary ſide by their own ſinful appetites and paſſions, and bribed or biaſſed by the corrupt cuſtoms of the world.

There is therefore a neceſſity not only of a clear and faithful repreſentation of things to men, in order to convince their reaſon and judgment, but of all the ſkill and force of perſuaſion addreſſed to the will and the paſſions. So TULLY addreſſed the whole ſenate of *Rome*, and DEMOSTHENES, the Athenian people, among whom were capacities and inclinations of infinite variety; and therefore they made uſe of all the lightning and thunder, all the intreaties and terrours, all the ſoothing elegancies and the flowery beauties of language, with which their art could furniſh them. Divines in the pulpit have much the ſame ſort of hearers, and therefore they ſhould imitate thoſe antient examples. The underſtanding indeed ought to be firſt convinced by the laineſt and ſtrongeſt force of reaſon; but when this is done, all the powerful motives ſhould be uſed, which have any juſt influence upon human nature, all the ſprings of paſſion ſhould be touched, to awaken the ſtupid and thoughtleſs into conſideration, to penetrate and melt the hardeſt heart, to perſuade the unwilling, to excite the lazy, to reclaim the obſtinate, and to reform the vicious part of mankind, as well as to encourage thoſe who are humble and pious, and to ſupport their practice and their hope. The tribes of men are ſunk into ſo fatal a degeneracy and dreadful diſtance from GOD, and from all that is holy and happy, that all the eloquence a preacher is maſter of, ſhould be employed in order to recover the world from its ſhameful ruin and wretchedneſs by the goſpel of our SAVIOUR, and reſtore it to virtue and piety, to God and happineſs, by the divine power of this goſpel. O may ſuch glorious maſters of ſacred oratory never be wanting in the pulpits of *Great Britain!*

XXXVI. SHALL I now ſpeak ſomething of my ſentiments concerning poeſy?

As for books of poeſy, whether in the antient or in the modern languages, they are of great uſe to be read in hours of leiſure, by all perſons that make any pretence to good education or learning, and that for ſeveral reaſons.

1. Becauſe there are many couplets or ſtanzas written in poetic meaſures, which contain a variety of morals, or rules of practice, relating to the common prudentials of mankind, as well as to matters of religion, and the poetic numbers add very conſiderable force to the memory.

Beſides, many an elegant and admirable ſentiment or deſcription of things which are found among the poets, are well worth committing to memory, and the particular meaſures of verſe greatly aſſiſt us in recollecting ſuch excellent paſſages, which might ſometimes raiſe our converſation from low and grovelling ſubjects.

2. In heroic verſe, but eſpecially in the grander lyrics, there are ſometimes ſuch noble elevations of thought and paſſion as illiuminate all things around us, and convey to the ſoul moſt exalted and magnificent images and ſublime ſentiments. Theſe furniſh us with glorious ſprings and mediums to raiſe and aggrandize our conceptions, to warm our ſouls, to awaken the better paſſions, and to elevate them even to a divine pitch, and that for devotional purpoſes. It is the lyric ode which has ſhown to the world ſome of the happieſt examples of this kind, and I cannot ſay but this part of poeſy has been my favourite amuſement above all others.

And for this reaſon it is, that I have never thought the heroic poems, Greek, Latin, or Engliſh, which have obtained the higheſt fame in the world, are ſufficiently diverſified, exalted, or animated, for want of the interſperſion of now and then an elegiac or lyric ode. This might have been done with great and beautiful propriety, where the poet has introduced a ſong at the feaſt, or the joys of a victory, or the ſoliloquies of divine ſatisfaction, or the penſive and deſpairing agoniesof diſtreſſing ſorrow. Why ſhould that which is called the moſt glorious form of poeſy, be bound down and confined to ſuch a long and endleſs uniformity of meaſures, when it ſhould kindle or melt the ſoul, ſwell or ſink it into all the various and tranſporting changes of which human nature is capable?

COWLEY, in his unfiniſhed fragment of the Davideis, has ſhown us this way to improvement; and whatever blemiſhes may be found in other parts of that heroic eſſay, this beauty and glory of it ought to be preſerved for imitation. I am well aſſured that if HOMER and VIRGIL had happened to practiſe it, it would have been renowned and glorified by every critic.

I am greatly miſtaken, if this wiſe mixture of numbers would not be a further reach of perfection than they have ever attained to without it; let it be remembered, that it is not nature and ſtrict reaſon, but a weak and awful reverence for antiquity and the vogue of fallible men, that has eſtabliſhed thoſe Greek and Roman writings as abſolute and complete patterns. In ſeveral ages there have been ſome men of learning who have very juſtly diſputed this glory, and have pointed to many of their miſtakes.

3. But ſtill there is another end of reading poeſy, and perhaps the moſt conſiderable advantage to be obtained from it by the bulk of mankind, and that is, to furniſh our tongues with the richeſt and the moſt polite variety of phraſes and words upon all occaſions of life or religion. He that writes well in verſe, will often find a neceſſity to ſend his thoughts in ſearch through all the treaſure of words that expreſs any one idea in the ſame language, that ſo he may comport with the meaſures, or the rhyme of the verſe which he writes, or with his own moſt beautiful and vivid ſentiments of the thing he deſcribes. Now by much reading of this kind, we ſhall inſenſibly acquire the habit and ſkill of diverſifying our phraſes upon all occaſions, and of expreſſing our ideas in the moſt proper and beautiful language, whether we write or ſpeak of the thinks of God or men.

It is pity that ſome of theſe harmonious writers have ever indulged any thing uncleanly or impure to defile their paper and abuſe the ears of their readers, or to offend againſt the rules of the niceſt virtue and politeneſs; but ſtill amongſt the writings of Mr. DRYDEN, and Mr. POPE, and Dr. YOUNG, as well as others, there is a ſufficient choice in our own language, wherein we ſhall not find any indecency to ſhock the moſt modeſt tongue or ear.

Perhaps there has hardly been a writer in any nation, and I may dare to affirm, there is none in ours, has a rich and happier talent of painting to the life, or has ever diſcovered ſuch a large and inexhauſted variety of deſcription, as the celebrated Mr. POPE. If you read his tranſlation of HOMER'S Iliad, you will find almoſt all the terms or phraſes in our tongue that are needful to expreſs any thing that is grand or magnificent; but if you purſue his Odyſſey, which deſcends much more into common life, there is ſcarce any uſeful ſubject of diſcourſe or thoug ht, or any ordinary occurrence which he has not cultivated and dreſſed in the moſt proper language; and yet ſtill he has ennobled and enlivened even the lower ſubjects with the brighteſt and moſt agreeable ornaments.

I ſhould add here alſo, that if the ſame author had more frequently employed his pen on divine themes, his ſhort poem on the MESIAH, and ſome part of his letter, between ABELARD and ELOISA, with that ode on the dying Chriſtian, &c. ſufficiently aſſure us, thathis pen would have honourably imitated ſome of the tender ſcenes of penitential ſorrow, as well as the ſublimer odes of the Hebrew Pſalmiſt, and perhaps diſcovered to us in a better manner than any other tranſlation has done, how great a poet ſat upon the throne of *Iſrael*.

4. After all that I have ſaid, there is yet a further uſe of reading poeſy, and that is, when the mind has been fatigued with ſtudies of a more laborious kind, or when it is any ways unfit for the purſuit of more difficult ſubjects, it may be as it were unbent, and repoſe itſelf a while on the flowery meadows where the muſes dwell. It is a very ſenſible relief to the ſoul when it it over tired, to amuſe itſelf with the numbers, and the beautiful ſentiments of the poets, and in a little time this agreeable amuſement may recover the languid ſpirits to activity and more important ſervice.

XXXVII. ALL this I propoſe to the world as my beſt obſervations about reading of verſe. But if the queſtion were offered to me, Shall a ſtudent of a bright genius never divert himſelf with writing poeſy? I would anſwer, Yes, when he cannot poſſibly help it; a lower genius in mature years would heartily wiſh that he had ſpent much time in reading the beſt authors of this kind, and employed much fewer hours in writing. But it muſt be confeſſed, or ſuppoſed at leaſt, that there may be ſeaſons when it is hardly poſſible for a poetic ſoul to reſtrain the fancy or quench the flame, when it is hard to ſuppreſs the exuberant flow of lofty ſentiments, and prevent the imagination from this ſort of ſtyle or language; and that is the only ſeaſon, I think, wherein this inclination ſhould be indulged; eſpecially by perſons who have devoted themſelves to profeſſions of a different kind; and one reaſon is, becauſe what they write in that hour is more likely to carry ry in t ſome appearance above nature, ſome happy imitation of the dictates of the muſe.*

XXXVIII. THERE are other things beſides hiſtory, grammar, languages, rhetoric, and poeſy, which have been included under the name of philological knowledge; ſuch as an acquaintance with the notions, cuſtoms, manners, tempers, polity, &c. of the various nations of the earth or the diſtinct ſects and tribes of mankind. This is neceſſary in order to underſtand hiſtory the better; and every man, who is a lawyer or a gentleman, ought to obtain ſome acquaintance with theſe things, without which he can never read hiſtory to any great advantage; nor can he maintain his own ſtation and character in life with dignity and honour without ſome inſight into them.

XXXIX. STUDENTS in divinity ought to ſeek a larger acquaintance with the Jewiſh laws, their polity, cuſtoms, &c. in order to underſtand many paſſages of the Old and New Teſtament, and to vindicate the ſacred writers from the reproaches of infidels. An acquaintance alſo with many of the Roman and Greecian affairs is needful to explain ſeveral texts of ſcripture in the New Teſtament, to lead ſincere enquirers into the true and genuine ſenſe of the evangeliſts and apoſtles, and to guard their writings from the unreaſonable cavils of men.

XL. THE art of criticiſm is reckoned by ſome as a diſtinct part of philology; but it is in truth nothing elſe than a more exact and accurate knowledge or ſkill in the other parts of it, and a readineſs to apply that knowledge on all occaſions, in order to judge well of what relates to theſe ſubjects, to explain what is obſcure in the authors which we read, to ſupply what is defective, and amend what is erroneous in manuſcripts or antient copies, to correct the miſtakes of authors and editors in the ſenſe or words, to reconcile the controverſies of the learned, and by theſe means to ſpread a juſter knowledge of theſe things among the inquiſitive part of mankind.

Every man who pretends to the learned profeſſions, if he doth not ariſe to be a critic himſelf in philological matters, he ſhould be frequently converſing with thoſe books, whether dictionaries, paraphraſts, commentators, or other critics, which may relieve any difficulties he meets with, and give him a more exact acquaintance with thoſe ſtudies which he purſues.

---

* *The muſe in the ancient heathen ſenſe is ſuppoſed to be a goddeſs; but in the philoſophic ſenſe it can mean no more, than a bright genius, with a warm and ſtrong imagination, elevated to an uncommon degree.*

And whenever any perſon is arrived to ſuch a degree of knowledge in theſe things as to furniſh him well for the practice of criticiſm, let him take great care that pride and vanity, contempt of others, with inward wrath and inſolence, do not mingle themſelves with his remarks and cenſures. Let him remember the common frailties of human nature, and the miſtakes to which the wiſeſt of men are ſometimes liable, that he may practiſe this art with due modeſty and candour.

END OF PART FIRST.

THE

IMPROVEMENT OF THE MIND.

PART SECOND.

CONTAINING

VARIOUS REMARKS AND RULES

CONCERNING THE

COMMUNICATION OF USEFUL KNOWLEDGE.

THE
IMPROVEMENT
OF THE
MIND.

PART II.

Communication of Uſeful Knowledge.

INTRODUCTION.

THE chief deſign of the former part of this book, is to lead us into proper methods for the improvement of our knowledge; let us now conſider what are the beſt means of improving the minds of others, and of communicating to them the knowledge which we have acquired. If the treaſures of the mind ſhould be hoarded up and concealed, they would profit none beſides the poſſeſſor, and even his advantage by the poſſeſſion would be poor and narrow, in compariſon of what the ſame treaſures would yield, both to himſelf and to the world, by a free communication and diffuſion of them. Large quantities of knowledge acquired and reſerved by one man, like heaps of gold and ſilver, would contract a ſort of ruſt and diſagreeable aſpect, by lying in everlaſting ſecrecy and ſilence; but they are burniſhed and glitter by perpetual circulation, through the tribes of mankind.

The two chief ways of conveying knowledge to others, are, that of verbal inſtruction to our diſciples, or by writing and publiſhing our thoughts to the world.

Here therefore I ſhall firſt propoſe ſome obſervations which relate to the conveyance of knowledge to others, by regular lectures of verbal inſtruction, or by converſation; I ſhall repreſent ſeveral of the chief prejudices of which learners are in danger, with directions to guard againſt them, and then mention ſome of the eaſieſt and moſt effectual ways of convincing perſons of their miſtakes, and of dealing with their underſtandings, when they labour under the power of prejudice. I ſhall afterwards add, by way of appendix, an eſſay written many years ago, on the ſubject of education, when I deſigned a more complete treatiſe of it.

CHAP. I.

Methods of Teaching and Reading Lectures.

HE that has learned any thing thoroughly, in a clear and methodical manner, and has attained a diſtinct perception, and an ample ſurvey of the whole ſubject, is generally beſt prepared to teach the ſame ſubject in a clear and eaſy method; for having acquired a large and diſtinct idea of it, and made it familiar to himſelf by frequent meditation, reading, and occaſional diſcourſe; he is ſuppoſed to ſee it on all ſides, to graſp it with all its appendices and relations in one ſurvey, and is better able to repreſent it to the learner in all its views, with all its properties, relations and conſequences. He knows which view or ſide of the ſubject to hold out firſt to his diſciple, and how to propoſe to his underſtanding that part of it which is eaſieſt to apprehend; and alſo knows how to ſet it in ſuch a light, as is moſt likely to allure and to aſſiſt his further inquiry.

But it is not every one who is a great ſcholar that always becomes the happieſt teacher, even though he may have a clear conception, and a methodical as well as an extenſive ſurvey of the branches of any ſcience. He muſt alſo be well acquainted with words, as well as ideas, in a proper variety; that when his diſciple does not take in the ideas in one form of expreſſion, he may change the phraſe into ſeveral forms, till at laſt he hits the underſtanding of his ſcholar, and enlightens it in the juſt idea of truth.

Beſides this, a tutor ſhould be a perſon of a happy and condeſcending temper, who has patience to bear with a ſlowneſs of perception, or want of ſagacity in ſome learners. He ſhould alſo have much candour of ſoul, to paſs a gentle cenſure on their impertinences, and to pity them in their miſtakes, and uſe every mild and engaging method for inſinuating knowledge into thoſe who are willing and diligent in ſeeking truth as well as reclaiming thoſe who are wandering into error. But of this I have ſpoken ſomewhat already, in a chapter of the former part, and ſhall have occaſion to expreſs ſomething more of it ſhortly.

A very pretty and uſeful way to lead a perſon into the knowledge of any particular truth is, by queſtion and anſwer, which is the Socratical method of diſputation, and therefore I refer the reader to that chapter or ſection which treats of it. On this account, dialogues are uſed as a polite and pleaſant method of leading gentlemen and ladies into ſome of the ſciences, who ſeek not the moſt accurate and methodical treaſure of learning.

But the moſt uſual, and perhaps the moſt excellent way of inſtructing ſtudents in any of the ſciences is, by reading lectures, as tutors in the academy do to their pupils.

The firſt work is to chuſe a book well written, which contains a ſhort ſcheme or abſtract of that ſcience; or at leaſt, it ſhould not be a very copious and diffuſive treatiſe. Or, if the tutor knows not any ſuch book already written, he ſhould draw up an abſtract of that ſcience himſelf, containing the moſt ſubſtantial and important parts of it, diſpoſed in ſuch a method as he beſt approves.

Let a chapter or ſection of this be read daily by the learner, on which the tutor ſhould paraphraſe in this manner, namely.

He ſhould explain both words and ideas more largely, and eſpecially what is dark and difficult ſhould be opened and illuſtrated, partly by various forms of ſpeech, and partly by apt ſimilitudes and examples. Where the ſenſe of the author is dubious, it muſt alſo be fixed and determined.

Where the arguments are ſtrong and cogent, they ſhould be enforced by ſome further paraphraſe, and the truth of the inferences ſhould be made plainly to appear. Where the arguments are weak and inſufficient, they ſhould be either confirmed or rejected as uſeleſs; and new arguments, if need be, ſhould be added to ſupport that doctrine.

What is treated very conciſely in the author ſhould be amplified, and where ſeveral things are laid cloſely together, they muſt be taken to pieces and opened by parts.

Where the tutor differs from the author which he reads, he ſhould gently point out and confute his miſtakes.

Where the method and order of the book is juſt and happy, it ſhould be purſued and commended; where it is defective and irregular, it ſhould be corrected.

The moſt neceſſary, the moſt remarkable and uſeful parts of that treatiſe, or of that ſcience, ſhould be peculiarly recommended to the learners, and preſſed upon them, that they would retain it in memory; and what is more unneceſſary or ſuperfluous ſhould be diſtinguiſhed, leſt the learner ſhould ſpend too much time in the more needleſs parts of a ſcience.

The various ends, uſes, and ſervices of that ſcience, or of any part of it, ſhould be alſo declared and exemplified, as far as the tutor hath opportunity and furniture to do it; particularly in mathematics and natural philoſophy.

And if there be any thing remarkably beautiful or defective in the ſtyle of the writer, it is proper for the tutor to make a juſt remark upon it.

While he is reading and explaining any particular treatiſe to his pupils, he may compare the different editions of the ſame book, or different writers upon the ſame ſubject; he ſhould inform them where that ſubject is treated by other authors, which they may peruſe, and lead his diſciples thereby to a further elucidation, confirmation, or improvement of that theme of diſcourſe in which he is inſtructing them.

It is alluring and agreeable to the learner alſo, now and then to be entertained with ſome hiſtorical remarks, or any occurrences or uſeful ſtories which the tutor has met with, relating to the ſeveral parts of ſuch a ſcience, provided he does not put off his pupils merely with ſuch ſtories, and neglect to give them a ſolid and rational information of the theme in hand. Teachers ſhould endeavour, as far as poſſible, to join profit and pleaſure together, and mingle delight with their inſtructions; but at the ſame time they muſt take heed, that they do not merely amuſe the ears, and gratify the fancy of their diſciples, without enriching their minds.

In reading lectures of inſtruction, let the teacher be very ſolicitous that the learners take up his meaning, and therefore he ſhould frequently inquire, whether he expreſſes himſelf intelligibly, whether they underſtand his ſenſe, and take in all his ideas, as he endeavours to convey them in his own forms of ſpeech.

It is neceſſary that he who inſtructs others, ſhould uſe the moſt proper ſtyle for the conveyance of his ideas eaſily into the minds of thoſe who hear him; and though in teaching the ſciences, a perſon is not confined to the ſame rules by which we muſt govern our language in converſation, for he muſt neceſſarily make uſe of many terms of art and hard words, yet he ſhould never uſe them merely to ſhew his learning, nor affect ſounding language without neceſſity; a caution which we ſhall ſoon further inculcate.

I think it very convenient and proper, if not abſolutely neceſſary, that when a tutor reads a following lecture to his pupils, he ſhould run over the foregoing lecture in queſtions propoſed to them, and by this means acquaint himſelf with their daily proficiency*. It is vain for the learner to object, ſurely we are not ſchool boys, to ſay our leſſons again; we came to be taught, and not to be catechiſed and examined. But alas! how is it poſſible for a teacher to proceed in his inſtructions, if he knows not how far the learner takes in and remembers what he has been taught?

Beſides, I muſt generally believe, it is ſloth or idleneſs, it is real ignorance, incapacity, or unreaſonable pride, that makes a learner refuſe to give his teacher an account how far he has profited by his laſt inſtructions. For want of this conſtant examination, young gentlemen have ſpent ſome idle and uſeleſs years, even under the daily labours and inſpection of a learned teacher; and they have returned from the academy without the gain of any one ſcience, and even with the ſhameful loſs of their claſſical learning, that is, the knowledge of Greek and Latin, which they had learnt in the grammar ſchool.

---

* Note, *This precaution, though never to be neglected, is of eſpecial importance when a pupil is entering on any new branch of learning, where it is abſolutely neceſſary the fundamental definitions and principles ſhould not only be clearly underſtood, but ſhould be rendered very familiar to the mind; and probably moſt tutors have found young perſons ſadly bewildered as they have gone on in their lectures, for want of a little more patience and care in this reſpect.*

Let the teacher always accommodate himſelf to the genius, temper, and capacity of his diſciples, and practiſe various methods of prudence to allure, perſuade, and aſſiſt every one of them in their purſuit of knowledge.

Where the ſcholar has leſs ſagacity, let the teacher enlarge his illuſtrations; let him ſearch and find out where the learner ſticks, what is the difficulty; and thus let him help the labouring intellect.

Where the learner manifeſts forward genius, and a ſprightly curioſity by frequent inquiries; let the teacher oblige ſuch an inquiſitive ſoul by ſatisfying thoſe queſtions, as far as may be done by decency and conveniency; and where theſe inquiries are unſeaſonable, let him not ſilence the young inquirer with a magiſterial rebuff, but with much candour and gentleneſs poſtpone thoſe queſtions, and refer them to a proper hour.

Curioſity is a uſeful ſpring of knowledge; it ſhould be encouraged in children, and awakened by frequent and familiar methods of talking with them. It ſhould be indulged in youth, but not without a prudent moderation. In thoſe who have too much, it ſhould be limited by a wiſe and gentle reſtraint or delay, leſt by wandering after every thing, they learn nothing to perfection. In thoſe who have too little, it ſhould be excited, leſt they grow ſtupid, narrow ſpirited, ſelf ſatisfied, and never attain a treaſure of ideas or an aptitude of underſtanding.

Let not the teacher demand or expect things too ſublime and difficult from the humble, modeſt, and fearful diſciple; And where ſuch a one gives a juſt and happy anſwer, even to plain and eaſy queſtions, let him have words of commendation and love ready for him. Let him encourage every ſpark of kindling light, till it grow up to bright evidence and confirmed knowledge.

Where he finds a lad pert, poſitive, and preſuming, let the tutor take every juſt occaſion to ſhew him his error; let him ſet the abſurdity in complete light before him, and convince him by a full demonſtration of his miſtake, till he ſees and feels it, and learns to be modeſt and humble.

A teacher ſhould not only obſerve the different ſpirit and humour among his ſcholars, but he ſhould watch the various efforts of their reaſon, and growth of their underſtanding. He ſhould practiſe in his young nurſery of learning, as a ſkilful gardner does in his vegetable dominions, and apply prudent methods of cultivation to every plant. Let him with a diſcreet and gentle hand, nip or prune the irregular ſhoots, let him guard and encourage the tender buddings of the underſtanding, till they be raiſed to a bloſſom, and let him kindly cheriſh the younger fruits.

The tutor ſhould take every occaſion to inſtil knowledge into his diſciples, and make uſe of every occurrence in life, to raiſe ſome profitable converſation upon it; he ſhould frequently inquire ſomething of his diſciples, that may ſet their young reaſon to work, and teach them how to form inferences, and to draw one propoſition out of another.

Reaſon being that faculty of the mind which he has to deal with in his pupil, let him endeavour by all proper and familiar methods to call it into exerciſe, and to enlarge the powers of it. He ſhould take frequent opportunities to ſhew them when an idea is clear or confuſed, when the propoſition is evident or doubtful, and when an argument is feeble or ſtrong. And by this means the minds will be ſo formed, that whatſoever he propoſes with evidence and ſtrength of reaſon, they will readily receive.

When any uncommon appearances ariſe in the natural, moral, or political world, he ſhould invite and inſtruct them to make their remarks on it, and give them the beſt reflections of his own, for the improvement of their minds.

He ſhould by all means make it appear that he loves his pupils, and that he ſeeks nothing ſo much as their increaſe of knowledge, and their growth in all valuable acquirements; this will engage their affection to his perſon, and procure a juſt attention to his lectures.

And indeed there is but little hope, that a teacher ſhould obtain any ſucceſs in his inſtructions, unleſs thoſe that hear him have ſome good degree of eſteem and reſpect for his perſon and character. And here I cannot but take notice by the way, that it is a matter of infinite and unſpeakable injury to the people of any town or pariſh, where the miniſter lies under contempt. If he has procured it by his own conduct, he is doubly criminal, becauſe of the injury he does to the ſouls of them that hear him; but if this contempt and reproach be caſt upon him by the wicked, malicious, and unjuſt cenſures of men, they muſt bear all the ill conſequences of receiving no good by his labours, and will be accountable hereafter to the great and divine judge of all.

It would be very neceſſary to add in this place, if tutors were not well apprized of it before, that ſince learners are obliged to ſeek a divine bleſſing on their ſtudies, by fervent prayer to the God of all wiſdom, their tutors ſhould go before them in this pious practice, and make daily addreſſes to heaven for the ſucceſs of their inſtructions.

CHAP. II.

Of an Inſtructive Style.

THE moſt neceſſary, and the moſt uſeful character of a ſtyle fit for inſtruction is, that it be plain, perſpicuous, and eaſy. And here I ſhall firſt point out all thoſe errours in ſtyle, which diminiſh or deſtroy the perſpicuity of it, and then mention a few directions, how to obtain a perſpicuous and eaſy ſtyle.

The errours of a ſtyle, which muſt be avoided by teachers, are theſe that follow.

I. THE uſe of many foreign words, which are not ſufficiently naturalized and mingled with the language which we ſpeak or write. It is true, that in teaching the ſciences in Engliſh, we muſt ſometimes uſe words borrowed from the Greek and Latin, for we have not in Engliſh names for a variety of ſubjects which belong to learning; but when a man affects upon all occaſions, to bring in long ſounding words from the ancient languages without neceſſity, and mingles French and other outlandiſh terms and phraſes, where plain Engliſh would ſerve as well, he betrays a vain and fooliſh genius unbecoming a teacher.

II. AVOID a fantaſtic learned ſtyle, borrowed from the various ſciences, where the ſubject and matter do not require the uſe of them. Do not affect terms of art on every occaſion, nor ſeek to ſhow your learning by ſounding words and dark phraſes; this is properly called pedantry.

Young preachers juſt come from the ſchools, are often tempted to fill their ſermons with logical and metaphyſical terms in explaining the text, and feed their hearers with ſonorous words of vanity. This ſcholaſtic language, perhaps, may flatter their own ambition, and raiſe a wonderment at their learning among the ſtaring multitude, without any manner of influence toward the inſtruction of the ignorant, or the reformation of the immoral or impious; theſe terms of art are but the tools of an artificer, by which his work is wrought in private; but the tools ought not to appear in the finiſhed workmanſhip.

There are ſome perſons ſo fond of geometry, that they bring in lines and circles, tangents and parabolas, theorems, problems, and poſtulates, upon all occaſions. Others who have dealt in aſtronomy, borrow even their nouns and their verbs, in their common diſcourſe, from the ſtars and planets; inſtead of ſaying, JACOB had twelve ſons, they tell you, JACOB had as many ſons as there are ſigns in the zodiac. If they deſcribe an inconſtant perſon, they make a planet of him, and ſet him forth in all his appearances, direct, retrograde, and ſtationary. If a candle be ſet behind the ſcreen, they call it eclipſed; and tell you fine ſtories of the orbit and the revolutions, the radii and the limb, or circumference of a cart wheel.

Others again dreſs up their ſenſe in chymical language, extracts and oils, ſalts and eſſences, exalt and invigorate their diſcourſes; a great wit with them, is ſublimated ſpirit; and a blockhead, is *caput mortuum*. A certain doctor in his bill, ſwells in his own idea when he tells the town, that he has been counſellor to the conſellors of ſeveral kings and princes, and that he has arrived at the knowledge of the green, black, and golden dragon, known only to magicians and hermetic philoſophers. It would be well if the quacks alone had a patent for this language.

III. THERE are ſome fine affected words that are uſed only at court, and ſome peculiar phraſes that are ſounding or gaudy, and belong only to the theatre; theſe ſhould not come into the lectures of inſtruction; the language of poets has too much of metaphor in it, to lead mankind into clear and diſtinct ideas of things; the buſineſs of poeſy is to ſtrike the ſoul with a glaring light, and to urge the paſſions into a flame by ſplendid ſhews, by ſtrong images, and a pathetic vehemence of ſtyle; but it is another ſort of ſpeech, that is beſt ſuited to lead the calm inquirer into juſt conceptions of things.

IV. THERE is a mean vulgar ſtyle, borrowed from the lower ranks of mankind, the baſeſt characters, and meaneſt affairs of life; this is alſo to be avoided; for it ſhould be ſuppoſed, that perſons of a liberal education, have not been bred up within the hearing of ſuch language, and conſequently they cannot underſtand it; beſides, that it would create very offenſive ideas, ſhould we borrow even ſimiles for illuſtration from the ſcullery, the dunghill, and the jakes.

V. AN obſcure and myſterious manner of expreſſion and cloudy language is to be avoided. Some perſons have been led by education or by ſome fooliſh prejudices, into a dark and unintelligible way of thinking and ſpeaking, and this continues with them all their lives, and clouds and confounds their ideas. Perhaps ſome of theſe may have been bleſſed with a great and comprehenſive genius, with ſublime natural parts, and a torrent of ideas flowing in upon them; yet for want of clearneſs, in the manner of their conception and language, they ſometimes drown their own ſubject of diſcourſe, and overwhelm their argument in darkneſs and perplexity. Such preachers as have read much of the myſtical divinity of the Papiſts, and imitated their manner of expreſſion, have many times buried a fine underſtanding under the obſcurity of ſuch a ſtyle.

VI. A long and tedious ſtyle is very improper for a teacher, for this alſo leſſens the perſpicuity of it. Some learned writers are never ſatisfied, unleſs they fill up every ſentence with a great number of ideas and ſentiments; they ſwell their propoſitions to an enormous ſize by explications, exceptions and precautions, leſt they ſhould be miſtaken, and crowd them all into the ſame period; they involve and darken their diſcourſe by many a parentheſis, and prolong their ſentences to a tireſome extent, beyond the reach of a common comprehenſion; ſuch ſort of writers or ſpeakers may be rich in knowledge, but they are ſeldom fit to communicate it. He that would gain a happy talent for the inſtruction of others, muſt know how to diſentangle and divide his thoughts, if too many of them are ready to crowd into one paragraph; and let him rather ſpeak three ſentences diſtinctly and perſpicuouſly, which the hearer receives at once with his ears and his ſoul, than crowd all the thoughts into one ſentence, which the hearer has forgotten before he can underſtand it.

But this leads me to the next thing I propoſed, which was to mention ſome methods, whereby ſuch a perſpicuity of ſtyle may be obtained as is proper for inſtruction.

1. Accuſtom yourſelf to read thoſe authors who think and write with great clearneſs and evidence, ſuch as convey their ideas into your underſtanding, as faſt as your eye or tongue can run over their ſentences; this will imprint upon the mind a habit of imitation, we ſhall learn the ſtyle with which we are very converſant, and practiſe it with eaſe and ſucceſs.

2. Get a diſtinct and comprehenſive knowledge of the ſubject which you treat of; ſurvey it on all ſides, and make yourſelf perfect maſter of it; then you will have all the ſentiments that relate to it in your view and under your command, and your tongue will very eaſily clothe thoſe ideas with words which your mind has firſt made ſo familiar and eaſy to itſelf.

Scribendi rectè ſapere eſt et principium et fons,
Verbaque proviſam rem non invita ſequentua.
Hor. *de Arte Poet.*

Good teaching from good knowledge ſprings,
Words will make haſte to follow things.

3. Be well ſkilled in the language which you ſpeak; acquaint yourſelf with all the idioms and ſpecial phraſes of it, which are neceſſary to convey the needful ideas on the ſubject of which you treat, in the moſt various and moſt eaſy manner to the underſtanding of the hearer; the variation of a phraſe in ſeveral forms is of admirable uſe to inſtruct, it is like turning all ſides of the ſubject to view; and if the learner happens not to take in the ideas in one form of ſpeech, probably another may be ſucceſsful for that end.

Upon this account I have always thought it an uſeful manner of inſtruction, which is uſed in ſome Latin ſchools, which they call variation. Take ſome plain ſentence in the Engliſh tongue, and then turn it into many forms in Latin;

as for inſtance, a wolf let into the ſheep fold, will devour the ſheep. If you let a wolf into the fold, the ſheep will be devoured; the wolf will devour the ſheep, if the ſheep fold be left open. If the fold be not left ſhut carefully, the wolf will devour the ſheep; the ſheep will be devoured by the wolf, if it find the way into the fold open. There is no defence of the ſheep from the wolf, unleſs it be kept out of the fold. A ſlaughter will be made among the ſheep, if the wolf can get into the fold. Thus by turning the active voice of verbs into the paſſive, and the nominative caſe of nouns into the accuſative, and altering the connexion of ſhort ſentences by different adverbs or conjunctions, and by ablative caſes with a prepoſition brought inſtead of the nominative, or by participles ſometimes put inſtead of verbs, the negation of and the contrary, inſtead of the aſſertion of the thing firſt propoſed, a great variety of forms of ſpeech will be created, which ſhall expreſs the ſame ſenſe.

4. Acquire a variety of words, a *copia verborum*; let your memory be rich in ſynonymous terms or words, expreſſing the ſame happy effect with the variation of the ſame thing; this will not only attain the phraſes in the foregoing direction, but it will add a beauty alſo to your ſtyle, by ſecuring you from an appearance of tautology, or repeating the ſame words too often, which ſometimes may diſguſt the ear of the learner.

5. Learn the art of ſhortening your ſentences, by dividing a long complicated period into two or three ſmall ones. When others connect and join two or three ſentences in one by relative pronouns, as which, whereof, wherein, whereto, &c. and by parentheſes frequently inſerted; do you rather divide them into diſtinct periods, or at leaſt if they muſt be united, let it be done rather by conjunctions and copulatives, that they may appear like diſtinct ſentences, and give leſs confuſion to the hearer or reader.

I know no method ſo effectual to learn what I mean, as to take now and then ſome page of an author, who is guilty of ſuch a long involved parenthetical ſtyle, and tranſlate it into plainer Engliſh, by dividing the ideas or the ſentences aſunder, and multiplying the periods, till the language become ſmooth and eaſy, and intelligible at firſt reading.

6. Talk frequently to young and ignorant perſons, upon ſubjects which are new and unknown to them, and be diligent

to inquire whether they underſtand you or not; this will put you upon changing your phraſes and forms of ſpeech in a variety, till you can hit their capacity, and convey your ideas into their underſtanding.

* * *

CHAP. III.

Of convincing other Perſons of any Truth; or delivering them from Errours and Miſtakes.

WHEN we are arrived at a juſt and rational eſtabliſhment in an opinion, whether it relate to religion or common life, we are naturally deſirous of bringing all the world into our ſentiments; and this proceeds from the affectation and pride of ſuperiour influence upon the judgment of our fellow creatures, much more frequently than it does from a ſenſe of duty or love to truth; ſo vicious and corrupt is human nature. Yet there is ſuch a thing to be found as an honeſt and ſincere delight in propagating truth, ariſing from a dutiful regard to the honour of our Maker, and an hearty love to mankind. Now if we would be ſucceſsful in our attempts to convince men of their errours, and to promote the truth, let us diveſt ourſelves as far as poſſible of that pride and affectation, which I mentioned before, and ſeek to acquire that diſintereſted love to men and zeal for the truth, which will naturally lead us into the beſt mothods to promote it. And here the following directions may be uſeful.

I. If you would convince a perſon of his miſtake, chuſe a proper place, a happy hour, and the fitteſt concurrent circumſtances for this purpoſe. Do not unſeaſonably ſet upon him when he has engaged in the midſt of other affairs, but when his ſoul is at liberty, and at leiſure to hear and attend. Accoſt him not upon that ſubject, when his ſpirit is ruffled or diſcompoſed with any occurrences of life, and eſpecially when he has heated his paſſions in the defenſe of a contrary opinion; but rather ſeize a golden opportunity, when ſome occurrences of life may caſt a favourable aſpect upon the truth of which you would convince him, or which may throw ſome dark and unhappy colour or conſequences upon that errour from which you would fain deliver him. There are ſome *Molliſſima tempora fundi*, ſome very agreeable moments of addreſſing a perſon, which if rightly managed, may render your attempts more ſucceſsful, and his conviction eaſy and pleaſant.

II. MAKE it appear by your whole conduct to the perſon you would teach, that you mean him well, that your deſign is not to triumph over his opinion, nor to expoſe his ignorance, or his incapacity of defending what he aſſerts. Let him ſee that it is not your aim to advance your own character as a diſputant, nor to ſet yourſelf up for an inſtructor to mankind; but that you love him; and ſeek his true intereſt; and not only aſſure him of this in words, when you are entering on an argument with him, but let the whole of your conduct to him at all times demonſtrate your real friendſhip for him. Truth and argument come with particular force from the mouth of one whom we truſt and love.

III. THE ſofteſt and gentleſt addreſs to the erroneous, is the beſt way to convince them of their miſtake. Some times it is neceſſary to repreſent to your opponent, that he is not far from the truth, and that you would fain draw him a little nearer to it; commend and eſtabliſh whatever he ſays that is juſt and true, as our bleſſed Saviour treated the young ſcribe, when he anſwered well concerning the two great commandments; 'Thou art not far,' ſays our Lord, 'from the kingdom of heaven,' *Mark* xii. 34. Imitate the mildneſs and conduct of the bleſſed JESUS.

Come as near to your opponent as you can in all your propoſitions, and yield to him as much as you dare in a conſiſtence with truth and juſtice.

It is a very great and fatal miſtake in perſons who attempt to convince or reconcile others to their party, when they make the difference appear as wide as poſſible; this is ſhocking to any perſon who is to be convinced, he will chuſe rather to keep and maintain his own opinions, if he cannot come into yours without renouncing and abandoning every thing that he believed before. Human nature muſt be flattered a little as well as reaſoned with, that ſo the argument may be able to come at his underſtanding, which otherwiſe will be thruſt off at a diſtance. If you charge a man with nonſenſe and abſurdities, with hereſy and ſelf contradiction, you take a very wrong ſtep towards convincing him.

Remember that errour is not to be rooted out of the mind of man by reproaches and railings, by flaſhes of wit and biting jeſts, by loud exclamations or ſharp ridicule; long declamations and triumph over our neighbour's miſtake, will not prove the way to convince him; theſe are ſigns either of a bad cauſe, or of want of arguments or capacity for the defence of a good one.

IV. SET therefore a conſtant watch over yourſelf, leſt you grow warm in diſpute before you are aware. The paſſions never clear the underſtanding, but raiſe darkneſs, clouds, and confuſion in the ſoul; human nature is like water which has mud at the bottom of it, it may be clear while it is calm and undiſturbed, and the ideas like pebbles appear bright at the bottom; but when once it is ſtirred and moved by paſſion, the mud riſes uppermoſt, and ſpreads confuſion and darkneſs over all the ideas; you cannot ſet things in ſo juſt and clear a light before the eyes of your neighbour, while your own conceptions are clouded with heat and paſſion.

Beſides, when your own ſpirits are a little diſturbed, and your wrath is awakened, this naturally kindles the ſame fire in your correſpondent, and prevents him from taking in your ideas, were they ever ſo clear; for his paſſions are engaged all on a ſudden for the defence of his own miſtakes, and they combat as fiercely as yours do, which perhaps may be awakened on the ſide of truth.

To provoke a perſon whom you would convince, not only rouſes his anger, and ſets it againſt your doctrine; but directs its reſentment againſt your perſon, as well as againſt all your inſtructions and arguments. You muſt treat an opponent like a friend, if you would perſuade him to learn any thing from you; and this is one great reaſon why there is ſo little ſucceſs on either ſide between two diſputants or controverſial writers, becauſe they are ſo ready to intereſt their paſſions in the ſubject of conteſt, and prevent the mutual light that might be given and received on either ſide; ambition, indignation, and a profeſſed zeal, reign on both ſides; victory is the point deſigned, while truth is pretended, and truth oftentimes periſhes in the fray, or retires from the field of battle; the combatants end juſt where they began, the underſtandings hold faſt the ſame opinions; perhaps with this diſadvantage, that they are a little more obſtinate, and rooted in them without freſh reaſon, and they generally come off with the loſs of temper and charity. V. NEITHER

V. Neither attempt nor hope to convince a perſon of his miſtake, by any penal methods or ſevere uſage; there is no light brought into the mind by all the fire and ſword, and bloody perſecutions that were ever introduced into the world. One would think that the princes, the prieſts and the people, the learned and the unlearned, the great and the mean, ſhould have all, by this time, ſeen the folly and madneſs of ſeeking to propagate the truth by the laws of cruelty; we compel a beaſt to the yoke by blows, becauſe the ox and the aſs have no underſtanding; but intellectual powers are not to be fettered and compelled at this rate; men cannot believe what they will, nor change their religion and their ſentiments as they pleaſe; they may be made hypocrites by the forms of ſeverity, and conſtrained to profeſs what they do not believe; they may be forced to comply with external practices and ceremonies, contrary to their own conſciences, but this can never pleaſe God, nor profit men.

VI. In order to convince another, you ſhould always make choice of thoſe arguments that are beſt ſuited to his underſtanding and capacity, his genius and temper, his ſtate, ſtation, and circumſtances. If I were to perſuade a ploughman of the truth of any form of church government, it ſhould not be attempted by the uſe of the Greek and Latin fathers; but from the word of God, the light of nature, and the common reaſon of things.

VII. Arguments ſhould always be propoſed in ſuch a manner, as may lead the mind onward to perceive the truth in a clear and agreeable light, as well as to conſtrain the aſſent by the power of reaſoning. Clear ideas in many caſes, are as uſeful toward conviction, as a well formed and unanſwerable ſyllogiſm.

VIII. Allow the perſon you deſire to inſtruct a reaſonable time to enter into the force of your argument. When you have declared your own ſentiments in the brighteſt manner of illuſtration, and enforced them with the moſt convincing arguments, you are not to ſuppoſe that your friends ſhould immediately be convinced and receive the truth; habitude in a particular way of thinking, as well as in moſt other things, obtains the force of nature, and you cannot expect to wean a man from his accuſtomed errours but by ſlow degrees, and by his own aſſiſtance; entreat him therefore not to judge on the ſudden, nor determine againſt you at once, but that he would pleaſe to review your ſcheme, reflect upon your arguments with all the impartiality he is capable of, and take time to think theſe over again at large; at leaſt that he would be diſpoſed to hear you ſpeak yet further on this ſubject, without pain or averſion.

Addreſs him therefore in an obliging manner, and ſay, I am not ſo fond as to think I have placed the ſubject in ſuch lights, as to throw you on a ſudden into a new track of thinking, or to make you immediately lay aſide your preſent opinions or deſigns; all that I hope is, that ſome hint or other which I have given, is capable of being improved by you to your own conviction, or poſſibly it may lead you into ſuch a train of reaſoning, as in time to effect a change in your thoughts; which hint leads me to add ----

IX. LABOUR as much as poſſible to make the perſon you would teach his own inſtructor. Human nature may be allured, by a ſecret pleaſure and pride in its own reaſoning, to ſeem to find out by itſelf the very thing that you would teach, and there are ſome perſons that have ſo much of this natural bias, towards ſelf, rooted in them, that they can never be convinced of a miſtake, by the plaineſt and ſtrongeſt arguments to the contrary; though the demonſtration glare in their faces; but they may be tempted by ſuch gentle inſinuations to follow a track of thought, which you propoſe, until they have wound themſelves out of their own errour, and led themſelves hereby into your opinion; if you do but let it appear, that they are under their own guidance rather than yours. And perhaps there is nothing which ſhows more dexterity of addreſs, than this ſecret influence over the minds of others, which they do not diſcern even while they follow it.

X. IF you can gain the main point in queſtion, be not very ſolicitous about the nicety with which it ſhall be expreſſed. Mankind is ſo vain a thing, that it is not willing to derive from another, and though it cannot have every thing from itſelf, yet it would ſeem at leaſt to mingle ſomething of its own with what it derives elſewhere; therefore when you have ſet your ſentiment in the fulleſt light, and proved it in the moſt effectual manner, an opponent will bring in ſome frivolous and uſeleſs diſtinction, on purpoſe to change the form of words in the queſtion, and acknowledge that he receives your propoſition in ſuch a ſenſe, and in ſuch a manner of expreſſion, though he cannot receive it in your terms and phraſes.

VANILLUS will confeſs he is now convinced, that a man who behaves well in the ſtate, ought not to be puniſhed for his religion; but yet he will not conſent to allow an univerſal toleration of all religions that do not injure the ſtate, which is the propoſition I had been proving. Well, let VANILLUS therefore uſe his own language, I am glad he is convinced of the truth; he ſhall have leave to dreſs it in his own way.

To theſe directions I ſhall add two remarks in the concluſion of this chapter, which would not ſo properly fall under the preceeding directions.

I. *Rem.* WHEN you have laboured to inſtruct a perſon in ſome controverted truth, and yet he retains ſome prejudice againſt it, ſo that he doth not yield to the convincing force of your arguments, you may ſometimes have happy ſucceſs in convincing him of that truth, by ſetting him to read a weak author, who writes againſt it. A young reader will find ſuch pleaſure in being able to anſwer the arguments of the oppoſer, that he will drop his former prejudices againſt the truth, and yield to the power and evidence of your reaſons. I confeſs this looks like ſetting up one prejudice to overthrow another; but where prejudices cannot be fairly removed by dint of reaſon, the wiſeſt and beſt of teachers will ſometimes find it neceſſary to make a way for reaſon and truth to take place by this contraſt of prejudices.

II. *Rem.* WHEN our deſign is to convince a whole family, or community of perſons of any miſtake, or to lead them into any truth, we may juſtly ſuppoſe there are various reigning prejudices among them; and therefore it is not ſafe to attempt, nor ſo eaſy to effect it, by addreſſing the whole number at once. Such a method has been often found to raiſe a ſudden alarm, and has produced a violent oppoſition even to the moſt fair, pious, and uſeful propoſal; ſo that he who made the motion, could never carry his point.

We muſt therefore firſt make as ſure as we can of the moſt intelligent and learned, at leaſt the moſt leading perſons amonſt them, by addreſſing them apart prudently, and offering proper reaſons, till they are convinced and engaged on the ſide of truth; and theſe may with more ſucceſs apply themſelves to others of the ſame community; yet the original propoſer ſhould not neglect to make a diſtinct application to all the reſt, ſo far as circumſtances admit.

Where a thing is to be determined by a number of votes, he ſhould labour to ſecure a good majority, and then take care that the moſt proper perſons ſhould move and argue the matter in public, leſt it be quaſhed in the very firſt propoſal by ſome prejudice againſt the propoſer.

So unhappily are our circumſtances ſituated in this world, that if truth, and juſtice, and goodneſs could put on human forms, and deſcend from heaven to propoſe the moſt divine and uſeful doctrines, and bring with them the cleareſt evidence, and publiſh them at once to a multitude whoſe prejudices are engaged againſt them, the propoſal would be vain and fruitleſs, and would neither convince nor perſuade. So neceſſary is it to join art and dexterity, together with the force of reaſon, to convince mankind of truth, unleſs we came furniſhed with miracles or omnipotence to create a conviction.*

* * *

CHAP. IV.

Of Authority, of the Abuſe of it, and of its real and proper Uſe and Service.

THE influence which other perſons have upon our opinions, is uſually called authority. The power of it is ſo great and widely extenſive, that there is ſcarcely any perſon in the world entirely free from the impreſſion of it, even after their utmoſt watchfulneſs and care to avoid it. Our parents and tutors, yea our very nurſes determine a multitude of our ſentiments; our friends, our neighbours, the cuſtom of the country where we dwell, and the eſtabliſhed opinions of mankind, form our belief; the great, the pious, the learned, and the ancient, the king, the prieſt, and the philoſopher, are characters of mighty efficacy to perſuade us to receive what they dictate. Theſe may be ranked under different heads of prejudice, but they are all of a kindred nature, and may be reduced to this one ſpring or head of authority.

---

* *The conduct of Chriſt and his apoſtles, armed as they were with ſupernatural powers, in the gradual openings of truth, againſt which the minds of their diſciples were ſtrongly prejudiced, may not only ſecure ſuch an addreſs from the imputation of diſhoneſt craft, but may demonſtrate the expediency, and in ſome caſes the neceſſity, of attending to it.*

I have treated of theſe particularly in Logic, Part II. Chap. III. Sec. 4th. Yet a few other remarks occurring among my papers, I thought it not improper to let them find a place here.

CICERO was well acquainted with the unhappy influences of authority, and complains of it in his firſt book, *De Natura Deorum*. 'In diſputes and controverſies, ſays he, it is not ſo much the author, or patrons of any opinion, as the weight and force of argument, which ſhould influence the mind. The authority of thoſe who teach, is a frequent hinderance to thoſe who learn, becauſe they utterly neglect to exerciſe their own judgment, taking for granted whatſoever others whom they reverence have judged for them. I can by no means approve, what we learn from the *Pythagoreans*, that if any thing aſſerted in diſputation was queſtioned, they were wont to anſwer, *Ipſe dixit*, i. e. *He himſelf ſaid ſo*, meaning PYTHAGORAS. So far did prejudice prevail, that authority without reaſon was ſufficient to determine diſputes and to eſtabliſh truth.

All human authority, though it be ever ſo ancient, though it hath had univerſal ſovereignty, and ſwayed all the learned and the vulgar world for ſome thouſands of years, yet has no certain and undoubted claim to truth; nor is it any violation of good manners, to enter a *caveat* with due decency againſt its pretended dominion. What is there among all the ſciences that has been longer eſtabliſhed and more univerſally received ever ſince the days of ARISTOTLE, and perhaps for ages before he lived, than this, that all heavy bodies whatſoever tend toward the centre of the earth? But Sir ISAAC NEWTON has found that thoſe bulky and weighty bodies, the earth and all the planets, tend toward the centre of the ſun, whereby, the authority of near three thouſand years or more is not only called in queſtion, but actually refuted and renounced.

Again, was ever any thing more univerſally agreed among the nation of the poets and critics, than that HOMER and

VIRGIL are inimitable writers of heroic poems? And whoever preſumed to attack their writings or their reputation, was either condemned for his malice or derided for his folly. Theſe ancient authors have been ſuppoſed to derive peculiar advantages to aggrandize their verſes from the heathen theology, and that variety of appearances in which they could repreſent their gods, and mingle them with the affairs of men; yet within theſe few years Sir RICHARD BLACKMORE, whoſe prefaces are univerſally eſteemed ſuperiour in their kind to any of his poems, has ventured to pronounce ſome noble truths in that excellent preface to his poem called ALFRED, and has bravely demonſtrated there, beyond all poſſible exception, that both VIRGIL and HOMER are often guilty of very groſs blunders, indecencies, and ſhameful improprieties; and that they were ſo far from deriving any advantage from the rabble of heathen gods, that their theology almoſt unavoidably expoſed them to many of thoſe blunders; and that it is not poſſible upon the foot of Gentile ſuperſtition, to write a perfect epic poem; whereas the ſacred religion of the bible, would furniſh a poem with much more juſt and glorious ſcenes and a nobler machinery.

Mr. DENNIS alſo had made it appear in his eſſays ſome years before, that there were no images ſo ſublime in the brighteſt of the heathen writers, as thoſe with which we are furniſhed in the poetic parts of the holy ſcripture; and RAPIN the French critic, dared to profeſs the ſame ſentiments, notwithſtanding the world of poets and critics had ſo univerſally and unanimouſly exalted the heathen writers to the ſovereignty for ſo many ages. If we would find out the truth in many caſes, we muſt dare to deviate from the long beaten track, and venture to think with a juſt and unbiaſſed liberty.

Though it be neceſſary to guard againſt the evil influences of authority, and the prejudices derived thence, becauſe it has introduced thouſands of errours and miſchiefs into the world, yet there are three eminent and remarkable caſes wherein authority, or the ſentiments of other perſons, muſt or will determine the judgments and practice of mankind.

I. PARENTS are appointed to judge for their children in their younger years, and to inſtruct them what they ſhould believe and what they ſhould practiſe in the civil and religious life. This is a dictate of nature, and doubtleſs it would have been ſo in a ſtate of innocence. It is impoſſible that children ſhould be capable of judging for themſelves, before their minds are furniſhed with a competent number of ideas, before they are acquainted with any principles and rules of juſt judgment, and before their reaſon is grown up to any degrees of maturity and proper exerciſes upon ſuch ſubjects.

I will not ſay, that a child ought to believe nonſenſe and impoſſibility, becauſe his father bids him; for ſo far as the impoſſibility appears, he cannot believe it; nor will I ſay, he ought to aſſent to all the falſe opinions of his parents, or to practiſe idolatry and murder, or miſchief, at their command; yet a child knows not any better way to find out what he ſhould believe and what he ſhould practiſe, before he can poſſibly judge for himſelf, than to run to his parents, and receive their ſentiments and their directions.

You will ſay, this is hard indeed, that the child of a heathen idolater, or a cruel cannibal, is laid under a ſort of neceſſity by nature of ſinning againſt the light of nature. I grant it is hard indeed, but it is only owing to our original fall and apoſtacy; the law of nature continues as it was in innocence, namely, that a parent ſhould judge for his child; but, if the parent judges ill, the child is greatly expoſed by it, through that univerſal diſorder that is brought into the world by the ſin of ADAM, our common father; and from the equity and goodneſs of God we may reaſonably infer, that the great Judge of all will do right; he will balance the ignorance and incapacity of the child, with the criminal nature of the offence in thoſe puerile inſtances, and will not puniſh beyond juſt demerit.

Beſides, what could God, as a Creator, do better for children in their minority, than to commit them to the care and inſtruction of parents; none are ſuppoſed to be ſo much concerned for the happineſs of children as their parents are; therefore it is the ſafeſt ſtep to happineſs, according to the original law of creation, to follow their directions, their parents reaſon acting for them, before they have reaſon of their own in proper exerciſe; nor indeed is there any better general rule in our fallen ſtate, by which children are capable of being governed, though in many particular caſes it may lead them far aſtray from virtue and happineſs.

If children by providence be caſt under ſome happier inſtructions, contrary to their parents' erroneous opinions, I cannot ſay it is the duty of ſuch children to follow errour, when they diſcern it to be errour, becauſe their father believes it; what I ſaid before, is to be interpreted only of thoſe that are under the immediate care and education of their parents, and not yet arrived at years capable of examination; I know not how theſe can be freed from receiving the dictates of parental authority in their youngeſt years, except by immediate or divine inſpiration.

It is hard to ſay, at what exact time of life the child is exempted from the ſovereignty of parental dictates. Perhaps it is much juſter to ſuppoſe, that this ſovereignty diminiſhes by degrees as the child grows in underſtanding and capacity, and is more and more capable of exerting his own intellectual powers, than to limit this matter by months and years.

When childhood and youth are ſo far expired, that the reaſoning faculties are grown up to any juſt meaſure of maturity, it is certain that perſons ought to begin to enquire into the reaſons of their own faith and practice in all the affairs of life and religion; but as reaſon does not arrive at this power and ſelf ſufficiency in any ſingle moment of time, ſo there is no ſingle moment when a child ſhould at once caſt off all its former beliefs and practices; but by degrees and in ſlow ſucceſſion he ſhould examine them, as opportunity and advantages offer; and either confirm, or doubt of, or change them, according to the leadings of conſcience and reaſon, with all its beſt advantages of information.

When we are arrived at manly age, there is no perſon on earth, no ſet or ſociety of men whatſoever, that have power and authority given them by God, the creator and governor of the world, abſolutely to dictate to others their opinions or practices in the moral and religious life. God has given every man reaſon to judge for himſelf, in higher or in lower degrees. Where leſs is given, leſs is to be required. But we are juſtly chargeable with criminal ſloth and miſimprovement of the talents with which our Creator has intruſted us, if we take all things for granted which others aſſert, and believe and practice all things which they dictate, without due examination.

II. ANOTHER caſe, wherein authority muſt govern our aſſent, is in many matters of fact. Here we may and ought to be determined by the declarations or narratives of other men; though I muſt confeſs, this is uſually called teſtimony rather than authority. It is upon this foot, that every ſon or daughter among mankind, are required to believe that ſuch and ſuch perſons are their parents, for they can never be informed of it but by the dictates of others. It is by teſtimony that we are to believe the laws of our country, and to pay all proper deference to the prince, and to magiſtrates, in ſubordinate degrees of authority, though we did not actually ſee them choſen, crowned, or inveſted with their title and character. It is by teſtimony that we are neceſſitated to believe there is ſuch a city as *Canterbury* or *York*, though perhaps we have never been at either; that there are ſuch perſons as Papiſts at *Paris* and *Rome*, and that there are many ſottiſh and cruel tenets in their religion. It is by teſtimony we believe that chriſtianity and the books of the bible, have been faithfully delivered down to us through many generations; that there was ſuch a perſon as CHRIST our Saviour, that he wrought miracles, and died on the croſs, that he roſe again and aſcended to heaven.

The authority or teſtimony of men, if they are wiſe and honeſt, if they had full opportunities and capacities of knowing the truth, and are free from all ſuſpicion of deceit in relating it, ought to ſway our aſſent; eſpecially when multitudes concur in the ſame teſtimony, and when there are many other attending circumſtances that raiſe the propoſition which they dictate to the degree of moral certainty.

But in this very caſe, even in matters of fact and affairs of hiſtory, we ſhould not too eaſily give in to all the dictates of tradition, and the pompous pretences to the teſtimony of men, till we have fairly examined the ſeveral things which are neceſſary to make up a credible teſtimony, and to lay a juſt foundation for our belief. There are and have been ſo many falſehoods impoſed upon mankind, with ſpecious pretences of eye and ear witneſſes, that ſhould make us wiſely cautious and juſtly ſuſpicious of reports, where the concurrent ſigns of truth do not fairly appear, and eſpecially where the matter is of conſiderable importance. And the leſs probable the fact teſtified is in itſelf, the greater evidence may we juſtly demand of the veracity of that teſtimony on which it claims to be admitted.

III. THE laſt caſe wherein authority muſt govern us is, when we are called to believe what perſons under inſpiration have dictated to us. This is not properly the authority of men, but of God himſelf; and we are obliged to believe what that authority aſſerts, though our reaſon at preſent may not be able any other way to diſcover the certainty or evidence of the propoſition; it is enough if our faculty of reaſon, in its beſt exerciſe, can diſcover the divine authority which has propoſed it. Where doctrines of divine revelation are plainly publiſhed, together with ſufficient proofs of their revelation, all mankind are bound to receive them, though they cannot perfectly underſtand them; for we know that God is true, and cannot dictate falſehood.

But if theſe pretended dictates are directly contrary to the natural faculties of underſtanding and reaſon which God has given us, we may be well aſſured theſe dictates were never revealed to us by God himſelf. When perſons are really influenced by authority to believe pretended myſteries, in plain oppoſition to reaſon, and yet pretend reaſon for what they believe, this is but a vain amuſement.

There is no reaſon whatſoever that can prove or eſtabliſh any authority ſo firmly, as to give it power to dictate in matters of belief, what is contrary to all the dictates of our reaſonable nature. God himſelf has never given us any ſuch revelations; and I think it may be ſaid, with reverence, he neither can nor will do it, unleſs he changes our faculties from what they are at preſent. To tell us we muſt believe a propoſition which is plainly contrary to reaſon, is to tell us that we muſt believe two ideas are joined, while, if we attend to reaſon, we plainly ſee and know them to be disjoined.

What could ever have eſtabliſhed the non ſenſe of tranſubſtantiation in the world, if men had been fixed in this great truth, that God gives no revelation contradictory to our own reaſon? things may be above our reaſon, that is, reaſon may have but obſcure ideas of them, or reaſon may not ſee the connexion of theſe ideas, or may not know at preſent the certain and exact manner of reconciling ſuch propoſitions either with one another, or with other rational truths, as I have explained in ſome of my logical papers; but when they ſtand directly and plainly againſt all ſenſe and reaſon, as tranſubſtantiation does, no divine authority can be pretended to enforce their belief, and human authority, is impudent to pretend to it. Yet this human authority, in the Popiſh countries, has prevailed over millions of ſouls, becauſe they have abandoned their reaſon, they have given up the glory of human nature to be trampled upon by knaves, and ſo reduced themſelves to the condition of brutes.

It is by this amuſement of authority, ſays a certain author, that the horſe is taught to obey the words of command, a dog to fetch and carry, and a man to believe inconſiſtencies and impoſſibilities. Whips and dungeons, fire and the gibbet, and the ſolemn terrours of eternal miſery after this life, will perſuade weak minds to believe againſt their ſenſes, and in direct contradiction to all their reaſoning powers. A parrot is taught to tell lies with much more eaſe and more gentle uſage; but none of all theſe creatures would ſerve their maſters at the expence of their liberty, had they but knowledge and a juſt uſe of reaſon.

I have mentioned three caſes, wherein mankind muſt or will be determined in their ſentiments by authority; that is, the caſe of children in their minority, in regard of the commands of their parents; the caſe of all men with regard to univerſal, complete, and ſufficient teſtimony of matter of fact; and the caſe of every perſon, with regard to the authority of divine revelation, and of men divinely inſpired; and under each of theſe I have given ſuch limitations and cautions as were neceſſary.

I proceed now to mention ſome other caſes, wherein we ought to pay a great deference to the authority and ſentiments of others, though we are not abſolutely concluded and determined by their opinions.

1. When we begin to paſs out of our minority, and to judge for ourſelves in matters of the civil and religious life, we ought to pay very great deference to the ſentiments of our parents, who in the time of our minority were our natural guides and directors in theſe matters. So in matters of ſcience, an ignorant and unexperienced youth ſhould pay great deference to the opinions of his inſtructors; and though he may juſtly ſuſpend his judgment in matters which his tutors dictate, till he perceive ſufficient evidence for them; yet neither parents nor tutors ſhould be directly oppoſed without great and moſt evident reaſons, ſuch as conſtrain the underſtanding or conſcience of thoſe concerned.

2. Perſons of years and long experience of human affairs, when they give advice in matters of prudence or civil conduct,

duct, ought to have a conſiderable deference paid to their authority by thoſe that are young and have not ſeen the world, for it is moſt probable that the elder perſons are in the right.

3. In the affairs of practical godlineſs, there ſhould be much deference given to perſons of long ſtanding in virtue and piety. I confeſs in the particular forms and ceremonies of religion, there may be as much bigotry and ſuperſtition amongſt the old as the young; but in queſtions of inward religion and pure devotion, or virtue, a man who has been long engaged in the ſincere practice of thoſe things, is juſtly preſumed to know more than a youth with all his ungoverned paſſions, appetites, and prejudices about him.

4. Men in their ſeveral profeſſions and arts, in which they have been educated, and in which they have employed themſelves all their days, muſt be ſuppoſed to have greater knowledge and ſkill than others; and therefore there is due reſpect to be paid to their judgment in thoſe matters.

5. In matters of fact, where there is not ſufficient teſtimony to conſtrain our aſſent, yet there ought to be due deference paid to the narratives of perſons wiſe and ſober, according to the degrees of their honeſty, ſkill and opportunity to acquaint themſelves therewith.

I confeſs in many of theſe caſes, where the propoſition is a mere matter of ſpeculation, and doth not neceſſarily draw practice along with it, we may delay our aſſent till better evidence appear; but where the matter is of a practical nature, and requires us to act one way or another, we ought to pay much deference to authority or teſtimony, and follow ſuch probabilities where we have no certainty; for this is the beſt light we have, and ſurely it is better to follow ſuch ſort of guidance, where we can have no better, than to wander and fluctuate in abſolute uncertainty. It is not reaſonable to put out our candle, and ſit ſtill in the dark, becauſe we have not the light of ſun beams.

CHAP. V.

*Of Treating and Managing the Prejudices of Men.**

IF we had nothing but the reaſon of men to deal with, and that reaſon were pure and uncorrupted, it would then be a matter of no great ſkill or labour to convince another perſon of common miſtakes, or to perſuade him to aſſent to plain and obvious truths. But alas! mankind ſtand wrapt round in errours, and intrenched in prejudicies; and every one of their opinions is ſupported and guarded by ſomething elſe beſide reaſon. A young bright genius, who has furniſhed himſelf with a variety of truths and ſtrong arguments, but is yet unacquainted with the world, goes forth from the ſchools like a knight errant, preſuming bravely to vanquiſh the follies of men, and to ſcatter light and truth through all his acquaintance. But he meets with huge giants and enchanted caſtles, ſtrong prepoſſeſſions of mind, habits, cuſtoms, educations, authority, intereſt, together with all the various paſſions of men, armed and obſtinate to defend their old opinions; and he is ſtrangely diſappointed in his generous attempts. He finds now that he muſt not truſt merely to the ſharpneſs of his ſteel, and to the ſtrength of his arm, but he muſt manage the weapons of his reaſon with much dexterity and artifice, with ſkill and addreſs, or he ſhall never be able to ſubdue errours and to convince mankind.

Where prejudices are ſtrong, there are theſe ſeveral methods to be practiſed in order to convince perſons of their miſtakes, and make a way for truth to enter into their minds.

I. By avoiding the power and influence of the prejudice, without any direct attack upon it; and this is done, by chuſing all the ſlow, ſoft, and diſtant methods of propoſing your own ſentiments, and your arguments for them, and by degrees leading the perſon ſtep by ſtep into thoſe truths which his prejudices would not bear if they were propoſed all at once.

---

* *For the nature and cauſes of prejudices, and for the preventing or curing them in ourſelves, ſee the Doctor's Syſtem of Logic, Part II. Chap. III.* Of the ſprings of falſe judgment, or the doctrine of prejudices.

Perhaps your neighbour is under the influence of ſuperſtition and bigotry in the ſimplicity of ſoul; you muſt not immediately run upon him with violence, and ſhow him the abſurdity or folly of his own opinions, though you might be able to ſet them in a glaring light; but you muſt rather begin at a diſtance, and eſtabliſh his aſſent to ſome familiar and eaſy propoſitions, which have a tendency to refute his miſtakes, and to confirm the truth; and then ſilently obſerve what impreſſion this makes upon him, and proceed by ſlow degrees as he is able to bear; and you muſt carry on the work, perhaps at diſtant ſeaſons of converſation. The tender or diſeaſed eye cannot bear a deluge of light at once.

Therefore we are not to conſider our arguments merely according to our own notions of their force, and from thence expect the immediate conviction of others; but we ſhould regard how they are likely to be received by the perſons we converſe with; and thus manage our reaſoning, as the nurſe gives a child drink by ſlow degrees, leſt the infant ſhould be choked or return it all back again, if poured in too haſtily. If your wine be ever ſo good, and you are ever ſo liberal in beſtowing it on your neighbour, yet if his bottle into which you attempt to pour it with freedom has a narrow mouth, you will ſooner overſet the bottle, than fill it with wine.

Over haſtineſs and vehemence in arguing is oftentimes the effect of pride; it blunts the poignancy of the argument, breaks its force, and diſappoints the end. If you were to convince a perſon of the falſehood of the doctrine of tranſubſtantiation, and you take up the conſecrated bread before him and ſay, ‘ You may ſee, and taſte, and feel, this is nothing but bread; therefore whilſt you aſſert that God commands you to believe it is not bread, you moſt wickedly accuſe God of commanding you to tell a lie.’ This ſort of language would only raiſe the indignation of the perſon againſt you, inſtead of making any impreſſions upon him. He would not ſo much as think at all on the argument you have brought, but he rages at you as a profane wretch, ſetting up your own ſenſe and reaſon above ſacred authority; ſo that though what you affirm is a truth of great evidence, yet you loſe the benefit of your whole argument by an ill managment, and the unſeaſonable uſe of it.

II. We may expreſsly allow and indulge thoſe prejudices for a ſeaſon, which ſeem to ſtand againſt the truth, and endeavour to introduce the truth by degrees while thoſe prejudices are expreſsly allowed, till by degrees the advancing truth may of itſelf wear out the prejudice. Thus God himſelf dealt with his own people the Jews after the reſurrection of Chriſt; for though from the following days of Pentecoſt when the goſpel was proclaimed and confirmed at *Jeruſalem*, the Jewiſh ceremonies began to be void and ineffectual for any divine purpoſe, yet the Jews who received Chriſt the Meſſiah were permitted to circumciſe their children, and to practiſe many Levitical forms, till that conſtitution which then waxed old ſhould in time vaniſh away.

Where the prejudices of mankind cannot be conquered at once, but they will riſe up in arms againſt the evidence of truth, we muſt make ſome allowances, and yield to them for the preſent, as far as we can ſafely do it without real injury to truth; and if we would have any ſucceſs in our endeavours to convince the world, we muſt practiſe this complaiſance for the benefit of mankind.

Take a ſtudent who has deeply imbibed the principles of the Peripatetics, and imagines certain immaterial beings, called ſubſtantial forms, to inhabit every herb, flower, mineral, metal, fire, water, &c. and to be the ſpring of all its properties and operations; or take a Platoniſt who believes an *anima mundi*, an univerſal ſoul of the world, to pervade all bodies, to act in and by them according to their nature, and indeed to give them their ſpecial powers; perhaps it may be very hard to convince theſe perſons by arguments, and conſtrain them to yield up theſe fancies. Well then, let the one believe his univerſal ſoul, and the other go on with his notion of ſubſtantial forms, and at the ſame time teach them how by certain original laws of motion, and the various ſizes, ſhapes, and ſituations of the parts of matter, allowing a continued divine concourſe in and with all, the ſeveral appearances in nature may be ſolved, and the variety of effects produced, according to the corpuſcular philoſophy, improved by DESCARTES, Mr. BOYLE, and Sir ISAAC NEWTON; and when they have attained a degree of ſkill in this ſcience, they will ſee theſe airy notions of theirs, theſe imaginary powers, to be ſo uſeleſs and unneceſſary, that they will drop them of their own accord; the Peripatetic forms will vaniſh from the mind like a dream, and the Platonic ſoul of the world will expire.

Or ſuppoſe a young philoſopher under a powerful perſuaſion that there is nothing but what has three dimenſions, length, breadth, and thickneſs, and conſequently that every finite being has a figure or ſhape, for ſhape is but the term and boundary of dimenſion; ſuppoſe this perſon, through the long prejudices of ſenſe and imagination, cannot be eaſily brought to conceive of a ſpirit, or a thinking being without ſhape and dimenſions; let him then continue to conceive a ſpirit with dimenſions; but be ſure in all his conceptions to retain the idea of cogitation, or a power of thinking, and thus proceed to philoſophize upon the ſubject. Perhaps in a little time he will find that length, breadth, and ſhape, have no ſhare in any of the actions of a ſpirit; and that he can manifeſt all the properties and relations of ſuch a being, with all its operations of ſenſation, volition, &c. to be as well performed without the uſe of this ſuppoſed ſhape or theſe dimenſions; and that all theſe operations and theſe attributes may be aſcribed to a ſpirit, conſidered merely as a power of thinking. And when he further conceives that God, the infinite Spirit, is an Almighty, ſelf exiſting, thinking power, without ſhape and dimenſions of length, breadth, and depth, he may then ſuppoſe the human ſpirit may be an inferiour ſelf ſubſiſting power of thought; and he may be inclined to drop the ideas of dimenſion and figure by degrees, when he ſees and is convinced they do nothing towards thinking, nor are they neceſſary to aſſiſt or explain the operations or properties of a ſpirit.

I may give another inſtance of the ſame practice, where there is a prejudicate fondneſs of particular words and phraſes. Suppoſe a man is educated in an unhappy form of ſpeech, whereby he explains ſome great doctrine of the goſpel, and by the means of this phraſe he has imbibed a very falſe idea of that doctrine; yet he is ſo bigotted to his form of words, that he imagines if thoſe words are omitted the doctrine is loſt. Now, if I cannot poſſibly perſuade him to part with his improper terms, I will indulge them a little, and try to explain them in a ſcriptural ſenſe, rather than let him go on in his miſtaken ideas.

CREDONIUS believes that Chriſt deſcended into hell; I think the word hell, as now commonly underſtood, is very improper here ; but ſince the bulk of chriſtians, and Credonius among them, will by no means part with the word out of their Engliſh creed, I will explain the word hell to ſignify the ſtate of the dead, or the ſeparate ſtate of ſouls ; and thus lead my friend into more juſt ideas of the truth, namely, that the ſoul of Chriſt exiſted three days in the ſtate of ſeparation from his body, or was in the inviſible world, which might be originally called hell in Engliſh, as well as *hades* in Greek.

Anilla has been bred a Papiſt all her days, and though ſhe does not know much of religion, yet ſhe reſolves never to part from the Roman Catholic faith, and is obſtinately bent againſt a change. Now I cannot think it unlawful to teach her the true chriſtian, that is, the Proteſtant religion, out of the epiſtle to the Romans, and ſhow her that the ſame doctrine is contained in the Catholic Epiſtles of St. Peter, James, and Jude ; and thus let her live and die a good chriſtian, in the belief of the religion I teach her out of the New-Teſtament, while ſhe imagines ſhe is a Roman Catholic ſtill, becauſe ſhe finds the doctrine ſhe is taught in the Catholic Epiſtles, and in that to the Romans.

I grant it is moſt proper there ſhould be different words, as far as poſſible, applied to different ideas ; and this rule ſhould never be diſpenſed with, if we had to do only with the reaſon of mankind; but their various prejudices and zeal for ſome party phraſes, ſometimes make it neceſſary that we ſhould lead them into truth under the covert of their own beloved forms of ſpeech, rather than permit them to live and die obſtinate and unconvincible in any dangerous miſtake : whereas an attempt to deprive them of their old eſtabliſhed words, would raiſe ſuch a tumult within them, as to render their conviction hopeleſs.

III. Sometimes we may make uſe of the very prejudices under which a perſon labours, in order to convince him of ſome particular truth, and argue with him upon his own profeſſed principles as though they were true. This is called, *argumentum ad hominem*, and in another way of dealing with the prejudices of men.

Suppoſe a Jew lies ſick of a fever, and is forbidden fleſh by his phyſician ; but hearing that rabbits were provided for the dinner of the family, deſired earneſtly to eat of them ; and ſuppoſe he became impatient becauſe his phyſician did not permit him, and he inſiſted upon it that it could do him no hurt ; ſurely rather than let him perſiſt in that fancy and that deſire, to the danger of his life, I would tell him that theſe animals were ſtrangled, which ſort of food was forbidden by the Jewiſh law, though I myſelf may believe that law is now aboliſhed.

In the ſame manner was Tenerilla perſuaded to let Damon her huſband proſecute a thief, who broke open their houſe on a Sunday. At firſt ſhe abhorred the thoughts of it, and refuſed it utterly, becauſe if the thief were condemned, according to the Engliſh law, he muſt be hanged ; whereas, ſaid ſhe, the law of God in the writings of Moses, does not appoint death to be the puniſhment of ſuch criminals, but tells us that a thief ſhould be ſold for his theft, Exod. xxii. 3. But when Damon could no other ways convince her that the thief ought to be proſecuted, he put her in mind that the theft was committed on a Sunday morning ; now the ſame law of Moses requires, that the Sabbath breaker ſhall ſurely be put to death. Exod. xxxi. 15. Numb. xv. 35. This argument prevailed with Tenerilla, and ſhe conſented to the proſecution.

Encrates uſed the ſame means of conviction when he ſaw a Mahometan drink wine to exceſs, and heard him maintain the lawfulneſs and pleaſure of drunkeneſs ; Encrates reminded him, that his own prophet Mahomet had utterly forbidden all wine to his followers ; and the good man reſtrained his vicious appetite by his ſuperſtition, when he could no otherwiſe convince him that drunkeneſs was unlawful, nor withhold him from exceſs.

Where we find any perſon obſtinately perſiſting in a miſtake in oppoſition to all reaſon, eſpecially if the miſtake be very injurious or pernicious, and we know this perſon will hearken to the ſentiment or authority of ſome favourite name, it is needful ſometimes to urge the opinion and authority of that favourite perſon, ſince that is likely to be regarded much more than reaſon. I confeſs I am almoſt aſhamed to ſpeak of uſing any influence of authority, while I would teach the art of reaſoning. But in ſome caſes it is better that poor, ſilly, perverſe, obſtinate creatures ſhould be perſuaded to judge and act right, by a veneration for the ſenſe of others, than to be left to wander in pernicious errours and continue deaf to all argument and blind to all evidence. They are but children of a larger ſize ; and ſince they perſiſt all their lives in their minority, and reject all true reaſoning, ſurely we may try to perſuade them to practiſe what is for their own intereſt by ſuch childiſh reaſons as they will hearken to; we may overawe them from purſuing their own ruin by the terrours of a ſolemn ſhadow, or allure them by a ſugar plumb to their own happineſs.

But after all, we muſt conclude, that whereſoever it can be done, it is beſt to remove and root out thoſe prejudices which obſtruct the entrance of truth into the mind, rather than to palliate, humour, or indulge them; and ſometimes this muſt neceſſarily be done, before you can make a perſon part with ſome beloved errour, and lead him into better ſentiments.

Suppoſe you would convince a gameſter that 'gaming is not a lawful calling, or buſineſs of life, to maintain one's ſelf by it,' and you make uſe of this argument, namely, 'That which doth not admit us to aſk the bleſſing of God that we may get gain by it, cannot be a lawful employment; but we cannot aſk the bleſſing of God on gaming, therefore, &c.' The minor is proved thus; 'We cannot pray that our neighbour may loſe; this is contrary to the rule of ſeeking our neighbour's welfare, and loving him as ourſelves; this is wiſhing miſchief to our neighbour. But in gaming, we can gain but juſt ſo much as our neighbour loſes; therefore in gaming, we cannot pray for the bleſſing of God that we may gain by it.'

Perhaps the gameſter ſhrugs and winces, turns and twiſts the argument every way, but he cannot fairly anſwer it; yet he will put up an anſwer to ſatisfy himſelf, and will never yield to the conviction, becauſe he feels ſo much of the ſweet influence of gaming, either towards the gratification of his avarice, or the ſupport of his expences. Thus he is under a ſtrong prejudice in favour of it, and is not eaſily convinced.

Your firſt work therefore, muſt be to lead him by degrees to ſeperate the thoughts of his own intereſt from the argument, and ſhew him that our own temporal intereſts, our livelihood, or our loſs, hath nothing to do to determine this point in oppoſition to the plain reaſon of things, and that he ought to put theſe conſiderations quite out of the queſtion, if he would be honeſt and ſincere in his ſearch after truth or duty, and that he muſt be contented to hearken to the voice of reaſon and truth, even though it ſhall run counter to his ſecular intereſt. When this is done, then an argument may carry ſome weight or force with it toward his conviction.

In like manner, if the queſtion were whether MATRISSA ought to expoſe herſelf and her other children to poverty and miſery, in order to ſupport the extravagances of a favourite ſon? Perhaps the mother can hear no argument againſt it; ſhe feels no conviction in the moſt cogent reaſonings, ſo cloſe do her fond prejudices ſtick to her heart. The firſt buſineſs here is to remove this prejudice. Aſk her therefore whether it is not a parent's duty to love all her children, ſo as to provide for their welfare? Whether duty to God and her family ought to regulate her love to a favourite? Whether her neighbour FLORIS did well in dreſſing up her daughters with expenſive gaudery, and neglecting the education of her ſon till ſhe ſaw his ruin? Perhaps by this method ſhe might be brought to ſee, that particular fondneſs for one child ſhould have no weight or force in determining the judgment in oppoſition to plain duty; and ſhe may then give herſelf up to conviction in her own caſe, and to the evidence of truth, and thus correct her miſtaken practice.

Suppoſe you would convert ROMINDA from popery and you ſet all the abſurdities, errours, and ſuperſtitions of that church before her in the moſt glaring evidence; ſhe holds them faſt ſtill, and cannot part with them, for ſhe had a moſt ſacred reverence for the faith and the church of her anceſtors, and cannot imagine that they were in the wrong. The firſt labour muſt be therefore to convince her, that our anceſtors were fallible creatures; that we may part with their faith without any diſhonour done to them; that all perſons muſt chuſe their religion for themſelves; that we muſt anſwer for ourſelves in the great day of judgment, and not we for our parents, nor they for us; that chriſtianity itſelf had never been received by her anceſtors in this nation, if they had perſiſted always in the religion of their parents, for they were all heathens. And when ſhe has by theſe methods of reaſoning been perſuaded that ſhe is not bound always to cleave to the religion of her parents, ſhe may then receive an eaſier conviction of the errours of *Rome* *.

---

* *But perhaps of all theſe different methods of curing prejudices, none can be practiſed with greater pleaſure to a wiſe*

CHAP. VI.

Of INSTRUCTION *by* PREACHING.

SECT. I.

Wiſdom better than Learning in the Pulpit.

TYRO is a young preacher juſt come from the ſchools of logic and divinity, and advanced to the pulpit; he was counted a ſmart youngſter in the academy for analyſing a propoſition, and is full, even to the brim, with the terms of his art and learning. When he has read his text after a ſhort flouriſh of introduction, he tells you, in how many ſenſes the chief word is taken, firſt among Greek Heathen writers, and then in the New Teſtament; he cites all the chapters and the verſes exactly, and endeavours to make you underſtand many a text before he lets you know fully what he means by his own. He finds theſe things at large in the critics, which he has conſulted, where this ſort of work is neceſſary and beautiful, and therefore he imagines it will become his ſermon well. Then he informs you very learnedly, of the various falſe expoſitions which have been given by divines and commentators on this part of ſcripture, and it may be the

---

and goood man, or with greater ſucceſs, where ſucceſs is moſt deſirable, than attempting to turn the attention of well meaning people from ſome point in which prejudice prevails, to ſome other of greater importance, and fixing their thoughts and heart on ſome great truth which they allow, and which leads unto conſequences contrary to ſome other notion which they eſpouſe and retain. By theſe means they may be led to forget their errours, while attentive to oppoſite truth; and in proportion to the degree in which their minds open, and their tempers grow more generous and virtuous, may be induced to reſign it. And ſurely nothing can give a benevolent mind more ſatiſfaction, than to improve his neighbour in knowledge, and in goodneſs at the ſame time, the reaſons of each of them too; and he refutes them with much zeal and contempt. Having thus cleared his way, he fixes upon the expoſition which his judgment beſt approves, and dwells, generally five or ten minutes upon the argument to confirm it; and this he does not only in texts of darkneſs and difficulty; but even when ſcarcely a child could doubt of his meaning.

This grammatical exerciſe being performed, he applies himſelf to his logic; the text is divided and ſubdivided into many little pieces; he points you preciſely to the ſubject and the predicate, brings you acquainted with the agent and the object, ſhows you all the properties and the accidents that attend it, and would fain make you underſtand the matter and the form of it, as well as he does himſelf. When he has thus done, two thirds of the hour is ſpent, and his hearers are quite tired; then he begins to draw near to his doctrine, or grand theme of diſcourſe; and having told the audience, with great formality and exactneſs, what it is, and in what method he ſhall manage it, he names you one or two particulars under the firſt general head; and by this time finds it neceſſary to add, 'He intended indeed to have been larger in the illuſtration of his ſubject, and he ſhould have given you ſome reaſons for the doctrine, but he is ſorry that he is prevented; and then he deſigned alſo to have brought it down to the conſcience of every man by a warm addreſs; but his time being gone, he muſt break off.' He hurries over a hint or two, which ſhould have been wrought up into exhortation or inſtruction, but all in great haſte, and thus concludes his work. The obſtinate and the careleſs ſinners go away unawakened, unconvinced; and the mourning ſoul departs uncomforted; the unbeliever is not led to faith in the goſpel, nor the immoral wretch to hate or forſake his inquiries; the hypocrite and the man of ſincerity are both unedified, becauſe the preacher had not time. In ſhort, he has finiſhed his work, and he has done nothing.

When I hear this man preach, it brings to my remembrance the account which I have heard concerning the CZAR of *Muſcovy*, the firſt time that his army beſieged a town in *Livonia*; he was then juſt come from his travels in *Great Britain*, where he and his miniſters of ſtate had learned the mathematics of an old acquaintance of mine; the CZAR took great care to begin the ſiege in form; he drew all his lines of circumvallation and contravallation according to the rules of art; but he was ſo tedious and ſo exact in theſe mathematical performances, that the ſeaſon was ſpent, he was forced to break up the ſiege, and retire without any execution done upon the town.

ERGATES is another ſort of preacher, a workman that need not be aſhamed; he had in his younger days but few of theſe learned vanities, and age and experience have now worn them all off; he preaches like a man who watches for our ſouls, as one that muſt give an account; he paſſes over leſſer matters with ſpeed, and purſues his great deſign, namely, to ſave himſelf and them that hear him, 1 Tim. iv. 16. And by following this advice of St PAUL, he happily complies with that great and natural rule of HORACE, always to make haſte towards the moſt valuable end;

Semper ad eventum feſtinat.——

He never affects to chuſe a very obſcure text, leſt he ſhould waſte too much of the hour in explaining the literal ſenſe of it; he reſerves all thoſe obſcurities, till they come in courſe at his ſeaſons of public expoſition; for it is his opinion, that preaching the goſpel for the ſalvation of men, carries in it a little different idea from a learned and critical expoſition of the difficult texts of ſcripture.

He knows well how to uſe his logic in his compoſures; but he calls no part of the words by their logical name, if there be any vulgar name that anſwers it; reading and meditation have furniſhed him with extenſive views of his ſubject, and his own good ſenſe hath taught him to give ſufficient reaſons for every thing he aſſerts; but he never uſes one of them till a proof is needful. He is acquainted with the miſtaken gloſſes of expoſitors; but he thinks it needleſs to acquaint his hearers with them, unleſs there be evident danger that they might run into the ſame miſtake. He underſtands well what his ſubject is not, as well as what it is; but when he would explain it to you, he never ſays, firſt, negatively, unleſs ſome remarkable errour is at hand, and which his hearers may eaſily fall into for want of ſuch a caution.

Thus in five or ten minutes at the moſt, he makes his way plain to the propoſition or theme on which he deſigns to diſcourſe; and being ſo wiſe as to know well what to ſay, and what to leave out, he proportions every part of his work to his time; he enlarges a little upon the ſubject, by way of illuſtration, till the truth becomes evident and intelligible to the weakeſt of his hearers; then he confirms the point with a few convincing arguments, where the matter requires it, and makes haſte to turn the doctrine into uſe and improvement. Thus the ignorant are inſtructed, and the growing chriſtians are eſtabliſhed and improved; the ſtupid ſinner is loudly awaknened, and the mourning ſoul receives conſolation; the unbeliever is led to truſt in Chriſt and his goſpel, and the impenitent and immoral are convinced and ſoftened, are melted and reformed. The inward voice of the Holy Spirit joins with the voice of the miniſter; the good man and the hypocrite have their proper portions aſſigned them, and the work of the Lord proſpers in his hand.

This is the uſual courſe and manner of his miniſtry. This method being natural, plain, and eaſy, he caſts many of his diſcourſes into this form; but he is no ſlave to forms and methods of any kind; he makes the nature of his ſubject, and the neceſſity of his hearers, the great rule to direct him what method he ſhall chuſe in every ſermon, that he may the better enlighten, convince, and perſuade. ERGATES well knows that where the ſubject itſelf is entirely practical, he has no need of the formality of long uſes and exhortations; he knows that practice is the chief deſign of doctrine; therefore he beſtows moſt of his labour upon this part of his office, and intermingles much of the pathetic under every particular; yet he wiſely obſerves the ſpecial dangers of his flock, and the errours of the time he lives in; and now and then, though very ſeldom, he thinks it neceſſary to ſpend almoſt a whole diſcourſe in mere doctrinal articles. Upon ſuch an occaſion, he thinks it proper to take up a little larger part of his hour in explaining and confirming the ſenſe of his text, and brings it down to the underſtanding of a child.

At another time, perhaps, he particularly deſigns to entertain the few learned and polite among his auditors; and that with this view, that he may ingratiate his diſcourſes with their ears, and may ſo far gratify their curioſity in this part of his ſermon, as to give an eaſier entrance for the more plain, neceſſary, and important parts of it into their hearts. Then he aims at, and he reaches the ſublime, and furniſhes out an entertainment for the fineſt taſte; but he ſcarcely ever finiſhes his ſermon without compaſſion to the unlearned and an addreſs that may reach their conſciences with words of ſalvation.

I have obſerved him ſometimes after a learned diſcourſe, come down from the pulpit as a man aſhamed and quite out of countenance; he has bluſhed and complained to his intimate friends, leſt he ſhould be thought to have preached himſelf, and not Christ Jesus his Lord; he has been ready to wiſh he had entertained the audience in a more unlearned manner, and on a more vulgar ſubject, leaſt the ſervants, and the labourers, and tradeſmen there, ſhould reap no advantage to their ſouls, and the important hour of worſhip ſhould be loſt, as to their improvement. Well he knows, and keeps it upon his heart, that the middle and lower ranks of mankind, and people of an unlettered character, make up the greater part of the aſſembly; therefore he is ever ſeeking how to adapt his thoughts and his language, and far the greateſt part of all his miniſtrations, to the inſtruction and profit of perſons of common rank and capacity; it is in the midſt of theſe that he hopes to find his triumph, his joy and crown in the laſt day, for not many wiſe, nor many noble are called.

There is ſo much ſpirit and beauty in his common converſation, that it is ſought and deſired by the ingenious men of his age; but he carries a ſevere guard of piety always about him, that tempers the pleaſant air of his diſcourſe, even in his brighteſt and freeſt hours; and before he leaves the place, if poſſible, he will have ſomething of the favour of heaven there; in the parlour he carries on the deſign of the pulpit, but in ſo elegant a manner that it charms the company, and gives not the leaſt occaſion for cenſure.

His polite acquaintance will ſometimes rally him for talking ſo plainly in his ſermons, and ſinking his good ſenſe to ſo low a level; but Ergates is bold to tell the gayeſt of them, 'Our public buſineſs, my friend, is chiefly with the weak and the ignorant; that is, the bulk of mankind; the poor receive the goſpel; the mechanics and day labourers, the women and children of my aſſembly, have ſouls to be ſaved; I will imitate my bleſſed Redeemer, in preaching the goſpel to the poor; and learn of St. Paul to become all things to all men, that I may win ſouls, and lead many ſinners to heaven by repentance, faith, and holineſs.'

SECT.

SECT. II.

A Branching Sermon.

I HAVE always thought it a miſtake in the preacher, to mince his text or his ſubject too ſmall, by a great number of ſubdiviſions; for it occaſions great confuſion in the underſtandings of the unlearned. Where a man divides his matter into more general, leſs general, ſpecial, and more particular heads, he is under a neceſſity ſometimes of ſaying, firſtly or ſecondly, two or three times together, which the learned may obſerve; but the greater part of the auditory, not knowing the analyſis cannot ſo much as take it into their minds, and much leſs treaſure up in their memories in a juſt and regular order; and when ſuch hearers are deſired to give ſome account of the ſermon, they throw the thirdly's and ſecondly's into heaps, and make very confuſed work in a rehearſal, by intermingling the general and the ſpecial heads. In writing a large diſcourſe this is much more tolerable *; but in preaching it is leſs profitable and more intricate and offenſive.

It is as vain an affectation alſo to draw out a long rank of particulars in the ſame ſermon under any one general, and run up the number of them to eighteenthly, or ſeven and twentiethly. Men that take delight in this ſort of work, will cut off all their ſenſe into ſhreds; and every thing that they can ſay upon any topic, ſhall make a new particular.

This ſort of folly and miſtaken conduct appears weekly in POLYRAMUS' lectures, and renders all his diſcourſes lean and inſipid. Whether it proceed from a mere barrenneſs of thought, and a native dryneſs of ſoul, that he is not able to vary his matter, and to amplify beyond the formal topics of an analyſis, or whether it ariſe from affectation of ſuch a way of talking, is hard to ſay; but it is certain, that the chief part of his auditory are not over much profited or pleaſed. When I ſit under his preaching, I fancy myſelf brought into the valley of EZEKIEL's viſion; it was full of bones, and behold, there were very many in the valley, and lo, they were very dry, Ezek. xxxvii. 1, 2.

---

* *Eſpecially as words may be uſed to number the generals; and figures of different kinds and forms, to marſhall the primary and ſecondary ranks of particulars under them.*

It is the variety of enlargement upon a few proper heads, that clothes the dry bones and fleſh and animates them with blood and ſpirits; it is this that colours the diſcourſe, makes it warm and ſtrong, and renders the divine propoſitions bright and perſuaſive; it is this brings down the doctrine or the duty to the underſtanding and conſcience of the whole auditory, and commands the natural affections into the intereſt of the goſpel. In ſhort, it is this that, under the influence of the Holy Spirit, gives life and force, beauty and ſucceſs to a ſermon, and provides food for ſouls. A ſingle roſe buſh, or a dwarf pear, with all their leaves, flowers, and fruit about them, have more beauty and ſpirit in themſelves, and yield more food and pleaſure to mankind, than the innumerable branches, boughs, and twigs of a long hedge of thorns. The fruit will feed the hungry, and the flower will refreſh the fainting; which is more than can be ſaid of the thickeſt oak in *Baſhan*, when it has loſt its vital juice; it may ſpread its limbs indeed far and wide, but they are naked, withered, and ſapleſs.

SECT. III.

The Harangue.

Is it not poſſible to forſake one extreme without running into a worſe? Is there no medium between a ſermon made up of ſixty dry particulars, and a long looſe declamation without any diſtinction of the parts of it? Muſt the preacher divide his works by the breaks of a minute watch, or let it run on inceſſantly to the laſt word, like the flowing ſtream of the hour glaſs that meaſures his divinity? Surely FLUVIO preaches as though he knew no medium; and having taken a diſguſt heretofore at one of POLYRAMUS' lectures, he reſolved his own diſcourſes ſhould have no diſtinction of particulars in them. His language flows ſmoothly in a long connexion of periods, and glides over the ear like a rivulet of oil over poliſhed marble, and, like that too, leaves no trace behind it. The attention is detained in a gentle pleaſure, and, to ſay the beſt thing poſſible of it, the hearer is ſoothed in ſomething like divine delight; but he can give the inquiring friend ſcarcely ly any account what it was that pleaſed him. He retains a faint idea of the ſwiftneſs, but has forgotten the ſenſe.

Tell me FLUVIO, is this the moſt effectual way to inſtruct ignorant creatures in the ſeveral articles of faith, and the various duties of the chriſtian life? Will ſuch a long uniform flow of language imprint all the diſtant parts of chriſtian knowledge on the mind, in their beſt form and order? Do you find ſuch a gentle and gilding ſtream of words, moſt powerful to call up the ſouls of ſinners from their dangerous or fatal lethargy? Will this indolent and moveleſs ſpecies of oratory make a thoughtleſs wretch attend to matters of infinite moment? Can a long purling ſound awaken a ſleepy conſcience, and give a periſhing ſinner juſt notices of his dreadful hazard? Can it furniſh his underſtanding and his memory with all the awful and tremendous topics of our religion, when it ſcarcely ever leaves any diſtinct impreſſion of one of them on his ſoul? Can you make the arrow wound where it will not ſtick? Where all the diſcourſe vaniſhes from the remembrance, can you ſuppoſe the ſoul to be profited or enriched? When you bruſh over the cloſed eye lids with a feather, did you ever find it give light to the blind? Has any of your ſoft harangues, your continued threads of ſilken eloquence, ever raiſed the dead? I fear your whole aim is to talk over the appointed number of minutes upon the ſubject, or to practiſe a little upon the gentler paſſions, without any concern how to give the underſtanding its due improvement, or to furniſh the memory with any laſting treaſure, or to make a knowing and a religious chriſtian.

Aſk old WHEATFIELD the rich farmer, aſk PLOWDOWN your neighbour, or any of his family who have ſat all their lives under your miniſtry, what they know of the common truths of religion, or of the ſpecial articles of chriſtianity. Deſire them to tell you, what the goſpel is, or what is ſalvation? What are their duties toward God, or what they mean by religion? Who is JESUS CHRIST, or what is the meaning of his atonement or redemption by his blood? Perhaps you will tell me yourſelf, that you have very ſeldom entertained them with theſe ſubjects. Well, inquire of them, what is heaven? Which is the way to obtain it, or what hope they have of dwelling there? Entreat them to tell you, wherein they have profited as to holineſs of heart or life, or fitneſs for death. They will ſoon make it appear by their awkward anſwers, that they underſtood very little of all your fine diſcourſes, and thoſe of your predeceſſors ; and have made but wretched improvement of forty years attendance at church. They have now and then been pleaſed, perhaps, with the muſic of your voice, as with the ſound of a ſweet inſtrument, and they miſtook that for devotion ; but their heads are dark ſtill, and their hearts earthly ; they are mere Heathens with a chriſtian name, and know little more of God than their yokes of oxen. In ſhort Polyramus' auditors have ſome confuſion in their knowledge, but Fluvio's hearers have ſcarcely any knowledge at all.

But you will tell me, your diſcourſes are not all made up of harangue ; your deſign is ſometimes to inform the mind by a train of well connected reaſonings, and that all your paragraphs in their long order prove and ſupport each other ; and though you do not diſtinguiſh your diſcourſe into particulars, yet you have kept ſome inviſible method all the way, and by ſome artificial gradations, you have brought your ſermon down to the concluding ſentence.

It may be ſo ſometimes, and I will acknowledge it ; but believe me Fluvio, this artificial and inviſible method carries darkneſs with it inſtead of light ; nor is it by any means a proper way to inſtruct the vulgar, that is, the bulk of your auditory ; their ſouls are not capable of ſo wide a ſtretch, as to take in the whole chain of your long connected conſequences ; you talk reaſon and religion to them in vain, if you do not make the argument ſo ſhort as to come within their graſp, and give a frequent reſt for their thoughts ; you muſt break the bread of life into pieces to feed children with it, and part your diſcourſes into diſtinct propoſitions, to give the ignorant a plain ſcheme of any one doctrine, and enable them to comprehend or retain it.

Every day gives us experiments to confirm what I ſay, and to encourage miniſters to divide their ſermons into ſeveral diſtinct heads of diſcourſe. Myrtilla, a little creature of nine years old, was at church twice yeſterday ; in the morning the preacher entertained his audience with a running oration, and the child could give her parents no other account of it, but that he talked ſmoothly and ſweetly about virtue and heaven. It was Ergates' lot to fulfill the ſervice of the afternoon ; he is an excellent preacher, both for the wiſe and unwiſe ; in the evening, Myrtilla very prettily entertained her mother with a repetition of the moſt conſiderable parts of the ſermon; for 'Here,' ſaid ſhe, 'I can fix my thoughts upon firſt, ſecondly, and thirdly, upon the doctrine, the reaſons, and the inferences; and I know what I muſt try to remember, and repeat it when my friends ſhall aſk me; but as for the morning ſermon I could do nothing but hear.'

This manner of talking in a looſe harangue, has not only injured our pulpits, but it makes the ſeveral eſſays and treatiſes, that are written now a days, leſs capable of improving the knowledge, or enriching the memory of the reader.

I will eaſily grant, that where the whole diſcourſe reaches not beyond a few pages; there in no neceſſity of the formal propoſal of the ſeveral parts, before you handle each of them diſtinctly, nor is there need of ſuch a ſet method; the unlearned and narrow underſtanding can take an eaſy view of the whole, without the author's pointing to the ſeveral parts. But where the eſſay is prolonged to a greater extent confuſion grows upon the reader almoſt at every page, without ſome ſcheme or method of ſucceſſive heads in the diſcourſe, to direct the mind and aid the memory.

If it be anſwered here, That neither ſuch treatiſes nor ſermons are a mere heap, for there is a juſt method obſerved in the compoſure, and the ſubjects are ranked in a proper order, it is eaſy to reply. That this method is ſo concealed, that a common reader or hearer can never find it; and you muſt ſuppoſe every one that peruſes ſuch a book, and much more that attends ſuch a diſcourſe, to have ſome good knowledge of the art of logic before he can diſtinguiſh the various parts and branches, the connexions and tranſitions of it. To an unlearned eye or ear, it appears a mere heap of good things, without any method, form, or order; and if you tell your young friends they ſhould get it into their heads and hearts, they know not how to ſet about it.

If we inquire, how it comes to paſs that our modern ingenious writers ſhould affect this manner? I know no juſter reaſon to give for it, than a humourous and wanton contempt of the cuſtoms and practices of our forefathers; a ſenſible diſguſt taken at ſome of their miſtakes and ill conduct, at firſt tempted a vain generation into the contrary extreme near ſixty years ago; and now even to this day it continues too much in faſhion, ſo that the wiſe as well as the weak are aſhamed oppoſe it, and are borne down with the current.

Our fathers formed their ſermons much upon the model of doctrine, reaſon, and uſe; and perhaps there is no one method of more univerſal ſervice, and more eaſily applicable to moſt ſubjects, though it is not neceſſary or proper in every diſcourſe; but the very names of doctrine and uſe are become now a days ſuch ſtale and old faſhoned things, that a modiſh preacher is quite aſhamed of them; nor can a modiſh hearer bear the ſound of thoſe ſyllables: A direct and diſtinct addreſs to the conſciences of ſaints and ſinners, muſt not be named or mentioned, though theſe terms are ſcriptural; leſt it ſhould be hiſſed out of the church like the garb of a roundhead or a puritan.

Some of our fathers have multiplied their particulars under one ſingle head of diſcourſe, and run up the tale of them to ſixteen or ſeventeen. Culpable indeed, and too numerous! But, in oppoſition to this extreme, we are almoſt aſhamed in our age to ſay thirdly; and all fourthly's and fifthly's are very unfaſhionable words.

Our fathers made too great account of the ſciences of logic and mataphyſics, and the formalities of definition and diviſion, ſyllogiſm and method, when they brought them ſo often into the pulpit; but we hold thoſe arts ſo much in contempt and defiance, that we had rather talk a whole hour without order and without edification, than be ſuſpected of uſing logic or method in our diſcourſes.

Some of our fathers neglected politeneſs perhaps too much, and indulged a coarſeneſs of ſtyle, and a rough or awkward pronunciation; but we have ſuch a value for elegancy, and ſo nice a taſte for what we call polite, that we dare not ſpoil the cadence of a period to quote a text of ſcripture in it, nor diſturb the harmony of our ſentences, to number or to name the heads of our diſcourſe. And for this reaſon, I have heard it hinted, that the name of CHRIST has been baniſhed out of our polite ſermons, becauſe it is a monoſyllable of ſo many conſonants, and ſo harſh a ſound.

But, after all, our fathers, with all their defects, and with all their weakneſſes, preached the goſpel of Chriſt to the ſenſible inſtruction of whole pariſhes, to the converſion of ſinners from the errours of their way, and the ſalvation of multitudes of ſouls. But it has been the late complaint of Dr. EDWARDS, and other worthy ſons of the eſtabliſhed church, that in too many pulpits now a days, there are only heard ſome ſmooth declamations, while the hearers that were ignorant of the goſpel abide ſtill without knowledge, and the profane ſinners are profane ſtill. O that divine grace would deſcend and reform what is amiſs in all the ſanctuaries of the nation!*

CHAP. VII.

Of Writing Books for the Public.

IN the explication and diſtinction of words and things by definition and deſcription, in the diviſion of things into their ſeveral parts, and in the diſtribution of things into their ſeveral kinds, be ſure to obſerve a juſt medium. We muſt not always explain and diſtinguiſh, define, divide, and diſtribute, nor muſt we always omit it; ſometimes it is uſuleſs and impertinent, ſometimes it is proper and neceſſary. There is confuſion brought into our argument and diſcourſe by too many, or by too few of theſe. One author plunges his readers into the midſt of things without due explication of them; another jumbles together without diſtinction, all thoſe ideas which have any likeneſs; a third is fond of explaining every word, and coining diſtinctions between ideas which have little or no difference; but each of theſe runs into extremes; for all theſe practices are equal hindrances to clear, juſt, and uſeful knowledge. It is not a long train of rules, but obſervation and good judgment, can teach us when to explain, define, and divide, and where to omit it.

In the beginning of a treatiſe, it is proper and neceſſary ſometimes to premiſe ſome *præcognita* or general principles, which

---

* *It appears by the date, at the bottom of this paper in the MMS. that it was written in the year* 1718. *The firſt, and perhaps the ſecond ſection of it, may ſeem now to be grown in a great meaſure out of date; but whether the third is not at leaſt as ſeaſonable now as ever, may deſerve ſerious conſideration. The author ſince this was drawn up, hath delivered his ſentiments more fully in the firſt part of that excellent piece entitled,* An humble Attempt for the Revival of Religion &c.

which may ſerve for an introduction to the ſubject in hand and give light or ſtrength to the following diſcourſe; but it is ridiculous, under a pretence of ſure introductions or prefaces, to wander to the moſt remote or diſtant themes, which have no near or neceſſary connexion with the thing in hand; this ſerves for no other purpoſe but to make a gaudy ſhow of learning. There was a profeſſor of divinity, who began an analytical expoſition of the Epiſtle to the Romans with ſuch *præcognita* as theſe; firſt he ſhowed the excellence of man above other creatures, who was able to declare the ſenſe of his mind by arbitrary ſigns; then he harangued upon the origin of ſpeech; after that he told of the wonderful invention of writing, and inquired into the author of that art which taught us to paint ſounds; when he had given us the various opinions of the learned on this point, and diſtributed writing into its ſeveral kinds, and laid down definitions of them all, at laſt he came to ſpeak of epiſtolary writing, and diſtinguiſhed epiſtles into familiar, private, public, recommendatory credentials, and what not? Thence he deſcended to ſpeak of the ſuperſcription, ſubſcription, &c. And ſome lectures were finiſhed before he came to the firſt verſe of St. PAUL's epiſtle; the auditors, being half ſtarved and tired with expectation, dropped away one by one, ſo that the profeſſor had ſcarce any hearers to attend the college or the lecture which he had promiſed on that part of ſcripture.

The rules which HORACE has given in his Art of Poetry, would inſtruct many a preacher and profeſſor of theology, if they would but attend to them. He informs us, that a wiſe author, ſuch as HOMER, who writes a poem of the Trojan war, would not begin a long and far diſtant ſtory of Jupiter, in the form of a ſwan impregnating LEDA with a double egg; from one part whereof HELEN was hatched, who was married to MENELAUS a Greek general, and then ſtolen from him by PARIS, ſon of PRIAM king of *Troy*, which awakened the reſentment of the Greeks againſt the Trojans.

Nec gemino bellum Trojanum orditur ab ovo.

But the writer, ſays he, makes all proper haſt to the event of things, and does not drag on ſlowly, perpetually turning aſide from his point, and catching at every incident to prolong his ſtory, as though he wanted matter to furniſh out his tale.

Semper ad eventum feſtinat.

Though, I muſt confeſs, I cannot think HOMER has always followed this rule in either of his two famous epic poems; but HORACE does not hear what I ſay. There is alſo another rule near akin to the former.

As a writer or a ſpeaker ſhould not wander from his ſubject to fetch in foreign matter from afar, ſo neither ſhould he amaſs together and drag in all that can be ſaid, even on his appointed theme of diſcourſe; but he ſhould conſider what is his chief deſign, what is the end he hath in view, and then to make every part of his diſcourſe ſubſerve that deſign. If he keep his great end always in his eye, he will paſs haſtily over thoſe parts or appendages of his ſubject which have no evident connexion with his deſign, or he will entirely omit them, and haſten continually towards his intended mark; employing his time, his ſtudy and labour, chiefly on that part of his ſubject which is moſt neceſſary to attain his preſent and proper end.

This might be illuſtrated by a multitude of examples; but an author, who ſhould heap them together on ſuch an occaſion, might be in danger of becoming himſelf an example of the impertinence he is cautioning others to avoid.

After you have finiſhed any diſcourſe which you deſign for the public, it would be always beſt, if other circumſtances would permit, to let it ſleep ſome time before you expoſe it to the world, that ſo you may have opportunity to review it with the indifference of a ſtranger, and to make the whole of it paſs under a new and juſt examination; for no man can judge ſo juſtly of his own work, while the pleaſure of his invention and performance is freſh, and has engaged his ſelf love too much on the ſide of what he has newly finiſhed.

If an author would ſend a diſcourſe into the world, which ſhould be moſt univerſally approved, he ſhould conſult perſons of very different genius, ſentiment, and party, and endeavour to learn their opinions of it. In the world it will certainly meet with all theſe. Set it therefore to view amongſt ſeveral of your acquaintance firſt, who may ſurvey the argument on all ſides, and one may happen to ſuggeſt a correction which is entirely neglected by others; and be ſure to yield yourſelf to the dictates of true criticiſm, and juſt cenſure, whereſoever you meet with them ; nor let a fondneſs for what you have written, blind your eyes againſt the diſcovery of your own miſtakes.

When an author deſires a friend to reviſe his work, it is too frequent a practice to diſallow almoſt every correction which a judicious friend would make ; he apologizes for this word and the other expreſſion ; he vindicates this ſentence, and gives his reaſons for another paragraph, and ſcarcely ever ſubmits to correction ; and this utterly diſcourages the freedom that a true friend would take, in pointing out our miſtakes. Such writers who are ſo full of themſelves, may go on to admire their own incorrect performances, and expoſe their works and their follies to the world without pity *.

Horace, in his Art of Poetry, talks admirably well on this ſubject ;

Quintilo ſi quid recitares, corrige, ſodes,
Hoc, aiebat, et hoc ; melius te poſſe negares
Bis terque expertum fruſtra ; delere jubebat,
Et male tornatos reddere verſus.
Si defendere delictum, quam vertere, malles ;
Nulla ultra verbum, aut operam inſumebat inanem,
Quin ſine rivali teque et tua ſolus amares

Let good Quintilius all your lines reviſe,
And he will freely ſay, mend this and this ;
Sir I have often try'd and try'd again,
I'm ſure I can't do better, 'tis in vain ;
Then blot out every word, or try once more,
And file theſe ill turn'd verſes o'er and o'er ;
But if you ſeem in love with your own thought,
More eager to defend, than mend, your fault,
He ſays no more, but lets the fop go on,
And, rival free, admire his lovely own. CREECH.

---

* *To cut off ſuch chicanery, it may perhaps be the moſt expedient for a perſon conſulted, on ſuch an occaſion, to note down on a diſtinct paper, with proper references, the adviſed alterations referring it to the author, to make ſuch uſe of them as he, on due deliberation, ſhall think fit.*

If you have not the advantage of friends to ſurvey your writings, then read them over yourſelf, and all the way conſider what will be the ſentence and judgment of all the various characters of mankind upon them; think what one of your own party would ſay, or what would be the ſenſe of an adverſary, imagine what a curious or a malicious man, what a captious or an envious critic, what a vulgar or a learned reader would object, either to the matter, the manner, or the ſtyle; and be ſure and think with yourſelf, what you yourſelf could ſay againſt your own writing, if you were of a different opinion, or a ſtranger to the writer; and by theſe means you will obtain ſome hints, whereby to correct and improve your own work, and to guard it better againſt the cenſures of the public, as well as to render it more uſeful to that part of mankind for whom you chiefly deſign it.

CHAP. VIII.

Of Writing and Reading Controverſies.

SECT. I.

Of Writing Controverſies.

WHEN a perſon of good ſenſe writes on any controverted ſubject, he will generally bring the ſtrongeſt arguments that are uſually to be found for the ſupport of his opinion; and when that is done, he will repreſent the moſt powerful objections againſt it in a fair and candid manner, giving them their full force; and at laſt will put in ſuch an anſwer to thoſe objections, as he thinks will diſſipate and diſſolve the force of them; and herein the reader will generally find a full view of the controverſy, together with the main ſtrength of argument on both ſides.

When a good writer has ſet forth his own opinion at large, and vindicated it with its faireſt and ſtrongeſt proofs, he ſhall be attacked by ſome pen on the other ſide of the queſtion; and if his opponent be a wiſe and ſenſible writer, he will ſhow the beſt reaſons why the former opinions cannot be true;

that is, he will draw out the objections againſt them in their fulleſt array, in order to deſtroy what he ſuppoſes a miſtaken opinion; and here we may reaſonably ſuppoſe, that an opponent will draw up his objections againſt the ſuppoſed errour in a brighter light, and with ſtronger evidence, than the firſt writer did, who propounded his opinion which was contrary to thoſe objections.

If, in the third place, the firſt writer anſwers his opponent with care and diligence, and maintains his own point againſt the objections which were raiſed in the beſt manner; the reader may then generally preſume, that in theſe three pieces he has a complete view of the controverſy; together with the moſt ſolid and powerful arguments on both ſides of the debate.

But when a fourth, and fifth, and ſixth volume appears in rejoinders and replies, we cannot reaſonably expect any great degrees of light to be derived from them; or that much farther evidences for truth ſhould be found in them; and it is ſufficiently evident from daily experience, that many miſchiefs attend this prolongation of controverſies among men of learning, which for the moſt part do injury to the truth, either by turning the attention of the reader quite away from the original point to other matters, or by covering the truth with a multitude of occaſional incidents and perplexities, which ſerve to bewilder rather than guide a faithful inquirer.

Sometimes, in theſe latter volumes, the writers on both ſides will hang upon little words and occaſional expreſſions of their opponent, in order to expoſe them, which have no neceſſary connexion with the grand point in view, and which have nothing to do with the debated truth.

Sometimes they will ſpend many a page in vindicating their own character, or their own little ſentences or accidental expreſſions, from the remarks of their opponent, in which expreſſions or remarks the original truth has no concern.

And ſometimes again you ſhall find even writers of good ſenſe, who have happened to expreſs themſelves in an improper and indefenſible manner, led away by the fondneſs of ſelf-love to juſtify thoſe expreſſions, and vindicate thoſe little lapſes they were guilty of, rather than they will condeſcend to correct thoſe little miſtakes, or recal thoſe improper expreſſions. O that we could put off our pride, our ſelf ſufficiency, and our infallibility, when we enter into a debate of truth! But if the writer is guilty of mingling theſe things with his grand argument, happy will that reader be who has judgment enough to diſtinguiſh them, and to neglect every thing that does not belong to the original theme propoſed and diſputed.

Yet here it may be proper to put in one exception to this general obſervation or remark, namely, when the ſecond writer attacks only a particular or collateral opinion which was maintained by the firſt, then the fourth writing may be ſuppoſed to contain a neceſſary part of the complete force of the argument, as well as the ſecond and third, becauſe the firſt writing only occaſionally or collaterally mentioned that ſentiment which the ſecond attacks and oppoſes; and in ſuch a caſe, the ſecond may be eſteemed as the firſt treatiſe on that controverſy. It would take up too much time ſhould we mention inſtances of this kind, which might be pointed to in moſt of our controverſial writers, and it might be invidious to enter into the detail.*

SECT. II.

Of Reading Controverſies.

WHEN we take a book into our hands wherein any doctrine or opinion is printed in a way of argument, we are too often ſatisfied and determined beforehand, whether it be right or wrong; and if we are on the writer's ſide, we are generally tempted to take his arguments for ſolid and ſubſtantial;

---

* *Upon this it may be remarked farther, that there is a certain ſpirit of modeſty and benevolence which never fails to adorn a writer on ſuch occaſions, and which generally does him much more ſervice in the judgment of wiſe and ſenſible men, than any poignancy of ſatire with which he might be able to animate his productions; and as this always appears amiable, ſo is it peculiarly charming, when the opponent ſhows that pertneſs and petulancy which is ſo very common on ſuch occaſions. When a writer, inſtead of purſuing with eager reſentment the antagoniſt that has given ſuch provocation, calmly attends to the main queſtion in debate, with a noble negligence of thoſe little advantages which ill nature and ill manners always give, he acquires a glory far ſuperiour to any trophies which wit can raiſe. And it is*

and thus our own former ſentiment is eſtabliſhed more powerfully, without a ſincere ſearch after truth.

If we are on the other ſide of the queſtion, we then take it for granted that there is nothing of force in theſe arguments, and we are ſatisfied with a ſhort ſurvey of the book, and are ſoon perſuaded to pronounce miſtake, weakneſs, and inſufficiency concerning it. Multitudes of common readers, who are fallen into any errour, when they are directed and adviſed to read a treatiſe that would ſet them right, and read it with a ſort of diſguſt which they have before entertained; they ſkim lightly over the arguments, they neglect or deſpiſe the force of them, and keep their own concluſion firm in their aſſent, and thus they maintain their errour in the midſt of light, and grow incapable of conviction.

But if we would indeed act like ſincere ſearchers for the truth, we would ſurvey every argument with a careful and unbiaſſed mind, whether it agree with our former opinion or not; we ſhould give every reaſoning its full force, and weigh it in our ſedateſt judgment. Now the beſt way to try what force there is in the arguments which are brought againſt our own opinions is, to ſit down and endeavour to give a ſolid anſwer, one by one, to every argument that the author brings to ſupport his own doctrine; and in this attempt, if we find there ſome arguments which we are not able to anſwer fairly to our own minds, we ſhould then begin to bethink ourſelves, whether we have not been hitherto in a miſtake, and whether the defender of the contrary ſentiments may not be in the right. Such a method as this will effectually forbid us to pronounce at once againſt thoſe doctrines, and thoſe writers, which are contrary to our ſentiments; and we ſhall endeavour to find ſolid arguments to refute their poſitions, before we entirely eſtabliſh ourſelves in a contrary opinion.

VOLATILIS had given himſelf up to the converſation of the free thinkers of our age, upon all ſubjects; and being pleaſed with the wit and appearance of argument, in ſome of

highly probable, that the ſolid inſtruction his pages may contain, will give a continuance to his writings far beyond what tracts of peeviſh controverſy are to expect, of which the much greater part are borne away into oblivion by the wind they raiſe, or burned in their own flames.

our modern Deiſts, had too eaſily deſerted the chriſtian faith, and gone over to the camp of the infidels. Among other books which were recommended to him, to reduce him to the faith of the goſpel, he had Mr. JOHN REYNOLDS' three Letters to a Deiſt put into his hand, and was particularly deſired to peruſe the third of them with the utmoſt care, as being an unanſwerable defence of the truth of chriſtianity. He took it in hand, and after having given it a ſhort ſurvey, he told his friend he ſaw nothing in it, but the common arguments which we all uſe to ſupport the religion in which we had been educated, but they wrought no conviction in him; nor did he ſee ſufficient reaſon to believe, that the goſpel of Chriſt was not a piece of enthuſiaſm, or a mere impoſture.

Upon this the friend who recommended Mr. REYNOLDS' three Letters to his ſtudy, being confident of the force of truth which lay there, entreated of VOLATILIS that he would ſet himſelf down with diligence, and try to anſwer Mr. REYNOLDS' third letter in vindication of the goſpel; and that he would ſhow under every head, how the ſeveral ſteps which were taken in the propagation of the chriſtian religion, might be the natural effects of impoſture or enthuſiaſm; and conſequently, that it deſerves no credit among men.

VOLATILIS undertook the work, and after he had entered a little way into it, found himſelf ſo bewildered, and his arguments to prove the apoſtles either enthuſiaſts or impoſtors ſo muddled, ſo perplexed, and ſo incluſive, that by a diligent review of this letter to the Deiſt, at laſt he acknowledged himſelf fully convinced that the religion of JESUS was divine; for that chriſtian author had made it appear, it was impoſſible that doctrine ſhould have been propagated in the world by ſimplicity or folly, by fraud or falſehood; and accordingly, reſigned his ſoul up to the goſpel of the bleſſed JESUS.

I fear there have been multitudes of ſuch unbelievers as VOLATILIS; and he himſelf has confeſſed to me, that even his moſt rational friends would be conſtrained to yield to the evidence of the chriſtian doctrine, if they would honeſtly try the ſame method.

A

DISCOURSE

ON THE

Education of Children and Youth.

A
DISCOURSE, &c.

INTRODUCTION.

Of the Importance of Education, and the deſign of this Diſcourſe, with a Plan of it.

THE children of the preſent age, are the hope of the age to come. We who are now acting our ſeveral parts in the buſy ſcenes of this life are haſtening off the ſtage apace. Months and days are ſweeping us away from the buſineſs and the ſurface of this earth, and continually laying ſome of us to ſleep under ground. The circle of thirty years will plant another generation in our room. Another ſet of mortals will be the chief actors in all the greater and leſſer affairs of this life, and will fill the world with bleſſings or with miſchiefs, when our heads lie low in the duſt.

Shall we not then conſider with ourſelves, what can we do now to prevent thoſe miſchiefs, and to entail bleſſings on our ſucceſſors? What ſhall we do to ſecure wiſdom, goodneſs, and religion, among the next generation of men? Have we any concern for the glory of God in the riſing age? Any ſolicitude for the propagation of virtue and happineſs to thoſe who ſhall ſtand up in our ſtead? Let us then hearken to the voice of GOD and SOLOMAN, and we ſhall learn how this may be done. The all wiſe GOD, and the wiſeſt of men, join to give us this advice; 'Train up a child in the way that he ſhould go, and, when he is old, he will not depart from it.' The ſenſe of it may be expreſſed more at large in this propoſition, namely; Let children have a good education given them in the younger parts of life, and this is the moſt likely way to eſtabliſh them in virtue and piety in their elder years.

In this diſcourſe, I ſhall not enter into any inquiries about the management of children in the two or three firſt years of their life. I leave that tender age entirely to the care of the mother and nurſe; yet not without a wiſh, that ſome wiſer, and happier pen would give advice or friendly notice to nurſes and mothers, of what they ought to avoid, and what they ought to do in thoſe early ſeaſons; and indeed they may do much towards the future welfare of thoſe young buds and bloſſoms, thoſe leſſer pieces of human nature, which are their proper charge. Some of the ſeeds of virtue and goodneſs may be conveyed almoſt into their very conſtitution betimes, by the pious prudence of thoſe who have the conduct of them. Some forward vices may be nipped in the bud, which in three years time might gain too firm a root in their heart and practice, and may not eaſily be plucked up by all the following care of their teachers.

But I begin with children when they can walk and talk, when they have learned their mother tongue, when they begin to give ſome more evident diſcoveries of their intellectual powers, and are more manifeſtly capable of having their minds formed and moulded into knowledge, virtue, and piety.

Now the firſt and moſt univerſal ingredient, which enters into the education of children, is an inſtruction of them in thoſe things that are neceſſary and uſeful for them in their rank and ſtation, and that with regard to this world and the world to come.

I limit theſe inſtructions, eſpecially ſuch as relate to this world, by the ſtation and rank of life in which children are born and placed by the providence of God. Perſons of better circumſtances in the world ſhould give their ſons and their daughters a much larger ſhare of knowledge, and a richer variety of inſtruction, than meaner perſons can or ought. But ſince every child that is born into this world has a body and a ſoul, ſince its happineſs or miſery in this world and the next depends very much upon its inſtructions and knowledge, it has a right to be taught by its parents, according to their beſt ability, ſo much as is neceſſary for its well being, both in ſoul and body, here and hereafter.

It is true, the great God our Creator hath made us reaſonable creatures; we are by nature capable of learning a million of objects; but, as the ſoul comes into the world, it is unfurniſhed with knowledge; we are born ignorant of every good and uſeful thing. We know not God, we know not ourſelves, we know not what is our duty and intereſt, nor where lies our danger; and, if left entirely to ourſelves, ſhould probably grow up like the brutes of the earth; we ſhould trifle away the brighter ſeaſons of life in a thouſand crimes and follies, and endure the fatigues and burdens of it, ſurrounded with a thouſand miſeries; and at laſt we ſhould periſh and die without knowledge or hope, if we had no inſtructors.

All our other powers of nature, ſuch as the will and the various affections, the ſenſes, the appetites, and the limbs, would become wild inſtruments of madneſs and miſchief, if not governed by the underſtanding; and the underſtanding itſelf would run into a thouſand errours, dreadful and pernicious, and would employ all the other powers in miſchief and madneſs, if it had not the happineſs to be inſtructed in the things of God and men. And who is there among all our fellow creatures ſo much oblidged to beſtow this inſtruction on us, as the perſons who, by divine providence, have been the inſtruments to bring us into life and being? It is their duty to give their young offspring this benefit of inſtruction, as far as they are able; or at leaſt to provide ſuch inſtructors for them, and to put the children under their care.

Here let us therefore inquire, what the ſeveral things are in which children ſhould be inſtructed.? And upon a due ſurvey, we ſhall find the moſt important things which children ought to learn and know, are theſe which follow.

SECT. I.

Of inſtructing Children in Religion.

RELIGION, in all the parts of it, both what they are to believe, and what they are to practiſe, is moſt neceſſary to be taught. I mention this in the firſt place, not only becauſe it is a matter of the higheſt importance, and of moſt univerſal concern to all mankind, but becauſe it may be taught even in theſe very early years of life. As ſoon as children begin to know almoſt any thing, and to exerciſe their reaſon about matters that lie within the reach of their knowledge, they may be brought to know ſo much of religion as is neceſſary for their age and ſtate. For inſtance; 1.

1. Young children may be taught, that there is a God, a great and almighty God, who made them, and who gives them every good thing. That he ſees them every where, though they cannot ſee him; and that he takes notice of all their behaviour.

2. They muſt be told what they muſt do, and what they ſhould avoid, in order to pleaſe God. They ſhould be taught in general to know the difference between good and evil. They may learn that it is their duty to fear, love, and worſhip God, to pray to him for what they want, and to praiſe him for what they enjoy; to obey their parents, to ſpeak truth, and to be honeſt and friendly to all mankind; and to ſet a guard upon their own appetites and paſſions. And that to neglect theſe things, or to do any thing contrary to them is ſinful in the ſight of God.

3. Their conſciences are capable of receiving conviction when they have neglected theſe duties, or broken the commands of God or their parents; and they may be made ſenſible, that the great and holy God, who loves the righteous, and beſtows bleſſings upon them, is angry with thoſe who have broken his commands and ſinned againſt him; and therefore that they themſelves are become ſubject to his diſpleaſure.

4. They may be told, that there is another world after this; and that their ſouls do not die when their bodies die; that they ſhall be taken up into heaven, which is a ſtate of pleaſure and happineſs, if they have been good and holy in this world; but if they have been wicked children, they muſt go down to hell, which is a ſtate of miſery and torment.

5. You may alſo inform them, that though their bodies die and are buried, yet God can and will raiſe them to life again; and that their body and ſoul together muſt be made happy or miſerable, according to their behaviour in this life.

6. They may be taught, that there is no way for ſuch ſinful creatures as we are to be received into God's favour, but for the ſake of JESUS CHRIST the Son of God; who came down from heaven into our world, and lived a life of pure and perfect holineſs, and ſuffered death to reconcile ſinners to the great and holy God who is offended by the ſins of men; and now he lives in heaven to plead for mercy for them; and that as this JESUS CHRIST is the only reconciler between God and man, ſo all their hope muſt be placed in him.

7. They may be taught, that their very natures are ſinful; they may be convinced, that they are inclined naturally to do evil; and they ſhould be informed, that it is the Holy Spirit of God who muſt cure the evil temper of their own ſpirits, and make them holy and fit to dwell with God in heaven.

8 They ſhould alſo be inſtructed to pray to God, that for the ſake of JESUS CHRIST, the grand mediator or reconciler, he would pardon their ſins paſt, and help them by his ſpirit to love and ſerve him with zeal and faithfulneſs for the time to come; that he would beſtow all neceſſary bleſſings upon them in this world, and bring them ſafe at laſt to his heavenly kingdom.

9. In the laſt place they ſhould be informed, that our bleſſed Saviour has appointed two ordinances to be obſerved by all his followers to the end of the world, which are uſually called ſacraments.

The one is baptiſm, wherein perſons are to be waſhed with water in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, to ſignify their being given up to Chriſt as his diſciples, or profeſſors of chriſtianity; and as an emblem of that purity of heart and life, which, as ſuch, they muſt aim at and endeavour after.

The other is the Lord's ſupper, wherein bread is broken and wine is poured out, and diſtributed, to be eaten and drank by chriſtians in remembrance of the body of Chriſt, which was put to a bloody death, as a ſacrifice to obtain pardon for the ſins of men.

The firſt of theſe, namely, baptiſm, is but once to be adminiſtered to any perſon; but the laſt, namely, the Lord's ſupper, is to be frequently performed, to keep us always in mind of the death of Chriſt, till he comes again from heaven to judge the world.

This is the ſum and the ſubſtance of the chriſtian religion, drawn out into a few very plain articles; and I think a child of common capacity, who is arrived at the age of three or four years, may be taught ſome part of thoſe articles, and may learn to underſtand them all at ſeven, or eight, or nine; at leaſt ſo far as is needful, for all his own exerciſes of devotion and piety. As his age increaſes, he may be inſtructed more at large in the principles and practices of our holy religion, as I ſhall more particularly ſhow in the third ſection.

SECT. II.

The Exerciſe and Improvement of their natural Powers.

HAVING mentioned religion as the principle thing in which children ſhould be inſtructed, I proceed to ſay, in the ſecond place, that children ſhould be taught the true uſe, the exerciſe, and improvement of their natural powers; and we may for the ſake of order diſtinguiſh theſe into the powers of body, and thoſe of the mind. Now though nature gives theſe powers and faculties, yet it is a good education that muſt inſtruct us in the exerciſe and improvement of them. Otherwiſe, like an uncultivated field, they will be ever barren and fruitleſs, or produce weeds and briars, inſtead of herbs and corn.

Among the powers of the mind which are to be thus cultivated, we may reckon the underſtanding, the memory, the judgment, the faculty of reaſoning, and the conſcience.

1. Teach them to uſe their underſtanding aright. Perſuade them to value their underſtanding as a noble faculty, and allure them to ſeek after the enrichment of it with a variety of knowledge. Let no day eſcape without adding ſome new ideas to their underſtanding, and giving their young unfurniſhed minds ſome further notion of things.

Almoſt every thing is new to children, and novelty will entice them onward to new acquiſitions. Show them the birds, the beaſts, the fiſhes and inſects, trees, herbs, fruits, and all the ſeveral parts and properties of the vegetable and animal world. Teach them to obſerve the various occurrences in nature and providence; the ſun, moon, and ſtars, the day and night, ſummer and winter, the clouds and the ſky, the hail, ſnow, and ice, winds, fire, water, earth, air, fields, woods, mountains, rivers, &c. Teach them that the great GOD made all things, and that his providence governs them all. Acquaint a child alſo with domeſtic affairs ſo far as is needful, and with the things that belong to the civil and the military life, the church and the ſtate, with the works of God and the works of men. A thouſand objects which ſtrike their eyes, their ears, and all their ſenſes, will furniſh out new matter for their curioſity and your inſtructions.

There are ſome books which are publiſhed in the world, wherein a child may be delightfully led into the knowledge of a great number of things by pictures, or figures of birds, beaſts, &c. well graven, with their names under them. This will much aſſiſt the labour of the teacher, and add to the pleaſure of children in their daily learning.

You who inſtruct them ſhould allure their young curioſity to aſk many queſtions, encourage them in it, and gratify their inquiries, by giving them the beſt and moſt ſatisfactory anſwers you can frame, and accommodate all your language to their capacity.

Give them, as far as poſſible, clear ideas of things, and teach them how to diſtinguiſh one thing from another by their different appearances, their different properties, and their different effects. Show them how far ſome things agree with others, and how far they differ from them; and, above all things, teach them as far as their young underſtandings will admit to diſtinguiſh between appearances and realities, between truth and falſehood, between good and evil, between trifles and things of importance; for theſe are the moſt valuable pieces of knowledge and diſtinction, which can be lodged in the young underſtandings of children.

2. The memory is another faculty of the ſoul, which ſhould be cultivated and improved. Endeavour carefully to impreſs on their minds things of worth and value. Some are, ſhort, uſeful and entertaining ſtories, which carry in them ſome virtue recommended, ſome vice ridiculed and puniſhed, various human and divine truths, rules of piety and virtue, precepts of prudence, &c. Repeat theſe things to them by day and by night; teach them theſe things in verſe and in proſe; rehearſe them in their ears at all proper ſeaſons, and take occaſion to make them repeat theſe things to you.

Be ſolicitous to know what it is they learn when they are out of your ſight, and take good care that their memories be not charged with trifles and idle trumpery. The memory is a noble repoſitory or cabinet of the ſoul, and ſhould not be filled with rubbiſh and lumber. Silly tales and fooliſh ſongs, the conundrums of nurſes, and the dull rhymes that are ſung to lull children aſleep, or to ſooth a froward humour, ſhould be generally forbidden to entertain thoſe children where a good education is deſigned. Something more innocent, more ſolid and profitable may be invented inſtead of theſe fooleries.

If it were poſſible, let a very few things be lodged in the memory of children which they need to forget when they are men.

The way to ſtrengthen and improve the memory, is to put it upon daily exerciſe. I do not mean that young children ſhould be kept ſo cloſe to their book as to be crammed with leſſons all the day long, and made to receive and ſuſtain a heavy load every hour. The powers of the ſoul, eſpecially ſuch as act in cloſe concert with the body, and are ſo much aided by the brain, may be overburdened, and injured, as well as the limbs; the mind may be perplexed and confounded, the head may be overſtrained and weakened, and the health impaired in thoſe tender years of life, by an exceſſive impoſition on the memory. The teachers of children ſhould have ſome prudence, to diſtinguſh their ages and their ſeveral capacities. They ſhould know how to avoid extremes.

But in general it may be ſaid, that the powers of the mind, as well as thoſe of the body, grow ſtronger by a conſtant and moderate exerciſe. Every day let the memory of a child be entruſted with ſomething new. Every day let ſome leſſon be learned; and every Lord's day at leaſt, even in their younger years let them learn by heart ſome one text of ſcripture, chiefly that on which the miniſter preaches. This will grow in time to a conſiderable treaſure of ſcriptural knowledge, which will be of unſpeakable uſe to them in the chriſtian life, I have known children, who, from their early years, have been trained up and taught to remember a few ſentences of a ſermon beſides the text, and by this mean have grown up by degrees to know all the diſtinct parts and branches of a diſcourſe, and in time to write down half the ſermon after they came home, to their own conſolation, and the improvement of their friends. Whereas thoſe who have never been taught to uſe their memories in their younger parts of life, loſe every thing from their thoughts when it is paſt off from their ears, and come home from noble and edifying diſcourſes, pleaſed, it may be, with the tranſient ſound, and commending the preacher, but uninſtructed, unimproved, without any growth in knowledge or piety.

3. The judgment is another natural power of the mind, which ſhould be exerciſed and improved in children. They ſhould be taught to paſs no judgment on men or things raſhly or ſuddenly, but to withhold their judgment until they ſee

ſufficient reaſon to determine them. To this end ſhow them, in little common inſtances, how often they are decieved when they judge on a ſudden, without due conſideration, and how often they are forced to change their opinions. Put them in mind how ſoon they have found themſelves miſtaken, when they have given their opinions too haſtily. This will make them cautious, and affraid of being ſo raſh, either in praiſing one thing or in condemning another.

Teach them to judge, not merely by outward ſhow and appearance, but by ſearching things to the bottom. Convince them that every man who has fine clothes is not rich, and that every man who talks hard words is not wiſe or learned; that every one who wears a red coat is not a ſoldier; nor is every perſon good humoured, who ſpeaks very complaiſant things in company. Take freequent occaſion to ſhow them, how much they will be miſtaken if they judge immediately by outward appearances of things.

Tell them, that they muſt not judge of things by cuſtom, nor by the common opinions of the multitude, nor by the practices of the rich and the great; for all theſe things may deceive them; but that they muſt judge of things merely by reaſon, excepting in matters of religion, and there they muſt judge rather by ſcripture or the word of God. Let them know, that cuſtoms change and alter, and the cuſtoms of one nation differ greatly from thoſe of another; but that the nature and the reaſon of things is ſtill the ſame, and that ſcripture is the conſtant and unchangeable rule of our religion.

To confirm this, let them be informed that it was the cuſtom of our anceſtors in *England*, and it is now the cuſtom in *France* and *Spain* to ſay their prayers in Latin, and to worſhip images; but it is a ſinful cuſtom, though the multitudes of the common people agree in it, and though the great and the rich practiſe it alſo. Nor is our preſent cuſtom in Great Britain, of praying in Engliſh, and worſhipping no images, to be eſteemed the right way of worſhip, becauſe it is the cuſtom of the nation; but becauſe it is agreeable to the word of God, which forbids us to worſhip images, or to pray in an unknown tongue.

Take every occaſion to guard them againſt prejudices, and paſſing a judgment on men or things upon inſufficient ground.

4. The reaſoning powers of the mind ſhould be cultivated and improved in children. This is very near akin to the former, and therefore I ſhall be very brief here.

Whenſoever children give you their opinion of any thing, aſk them to give you alſo the reaſon why they are of that opinion; whenſoever they deſire or wiſh for any thing, or ſhow an averſion to it, inquire what is the reaſon of their deſire or averſion; when they have done any thing of their own will, aſk them the reaſon why they did it. And when you do any thing that is for their good, ſhow them the reaſon why you do it, and convince them that it was fit and neceſſary to be done, though perhaps it was not ſo pleaſing to them.

By calling their young reaſon thus into exerciſe, you will teach them wiſdom betimes; you will awaken manly thoughts within them, and ſoon lead them to a rational and manly conduct in their childiſh years; by this mean alſo you will always have a handle to take hold of, in order to perſuade them to their duty, and to ſave them from miſchief. But if their reaſoning powers be neglected, you will train them up like the horſe and the mule who have no underſtanding; they will grow like brutes in the ſhape of men, and reaſon will have but little power over them in the following parts of life.

5. Conſcience is another natural power of the ſoul, wherein the principles of virtue and rules of duty to God and man are to be laid up; it is ſomething within us that calls us to account for our faults, and by which we paſs a judgment concerning ourſelves and all our actions.

Children have a conſcience within them, and it ſhould be awakened early to its duty. They ſhould be taught to reflect and look back upon their own behaviour, to call themſelves often to account, to compare their deeds with thoſe good rules and principles laid up in their minds, and to ſee how far they have complied with them, and how far they have neglected them. Parents ſhould teach their children to pay a religious reſpect to the inward dictates of virtue within them, to examine their actions continually by the light of their own conſciences, and to rejoice when they can approve themſelves to their own minds, that they have acted well according to the beſt of their knowledge; they ought alſo to attend to the inward reproofs of conſcience, and mourn, and be aſhamed, and repent when they have ſinned againſt their light. It is of admirable uſe toward all the practices of religion and every virtue, to have conſcience well ſtored with good principles, and to be always kept tender and watchful; it is proper that children ſhould learn to reverence and obey this inward monitor betimes, that every wilful ſin may give their conſciences a ſenſible pain and uneaſineſs, and that they may be diſpoſed to ſacrafice every thing elſe to conſiderations of conſcience, and to endure any extremities rather than act contrary to it.

I proceed in the next place to conſider, the ſeveral powers of the body which ought to be regulated and managed by the due inſtruction of children in their younger years. Now as the God of nature has given children eyes, and tongues, and feet, and arms, and hands, it is expedient that parents ſhould teach their children the proper uſe of them.

1. The God of nature hath given them eyes. Let their parents teach them to uſe theſe eyes aright. Would it be amiſs in me here to give a hint or two of this kind? May not children be warned againſt a ſtaring look, againſt ſtretching their eye lids into a glare of wildneſs? May they not be forbid to look aſide on any object in a ſquinting manner, when their faces are turned another way? ſhould they not be inſtructed to look directly with their face turned to the thing they look at? May they not be taught with due courage to look in the face of the perſon they ſpeak to, yet with an humble modeſt aſpect, as befits a child? A becoming courage and a becoming modeſty dwell much in the eye.

Some children ſhould be often admoniſhed to lay aſide a gloomy and a frowning look, a ſcowling air, an uneaſy and forbidding aſpect. They ſhould be taught to ſmooth the ruffles of their brow, and put on a lively, pleaſing, and cheerful countenance among their friends; ſome there are who have all theſe graces by nature, but thoſe who have them not may be corrected and ſoftened by the care of parents in younger years.*

2. Let parents teach children to uſe their tongues properly and agreeably; not only to ſpeak, but to pronounce their

---

* *It may here be recollected by the way, that a gloomineſs of aſpect does not always ariſe from a malignity of temper, but ſometimes from fear of diſpleaſing and incurring reproof; and is therefore often to be removed by ſpeaking kindly to children, and encouraging them with expreſſions of candour and tenderneſs. To know how in ſuch caſes to divert a child, and make him cheerful and happy in the company of a parent, is none of the leaſt important cares of education.*

words plain and diſtinct. Let them be inſtructed to keep due and proper diſtances between their words and ſentences, and not ſpeak in a ſwift hurry, with a tumult of ſyllables and clutter upon their lips, which will ſound like a foreign gibberiſh, and never be underſtood. Nor ſhould they drawl out their words in a ſlow long tone, which is equally ungraceful and diſagreeable,

There are two other common faults in ſpeaking, and where they are found they ſhould be corrected early in children.

The one is *liſping*, which is a pronunciation of the letter S or Z, or C before E and I, as though it were TH. Thus, inſtead of *ſpice* they cry *thpithe*, inſtead of *ceaſe* they ſay *theathe*. This may be cured by teaching them to pronounce a few ſuch words as theſe, where the ſound of the letter S prevails, with their teeth ſhut cloſe; and by forbidding them to put their tongue between their teeth at any time, except when *th* is to be pronounced.

The other fault is *ſtammering*, which I ſuppoſe may be commonly prevented or cured by teaching children not to ſpeak much, and to ſpeak ſlow always; and they ſhould be warned againſt all anger or haſtineſs, or eagerneſs of ſpirit; for ſuch a temper will throw out their words faſter than the organs of ſpeech can accommodate themſelves to form the ſyllables, and thus bring a hurry and confuſion into their ſpeech; and they ſhould alſo gain a good degree of courage or becoming aſſurance, and not to ſpeak with much concern or fear; for fear will ſtop the organs of ſpeech, and hinder the formation of words.

But I inſiſt no longer on the uſe of the tongue in ſpeaking.

3. As God hath given them feet, let parents teach them to ſtand firm and ſtrong, and to walk in a becoming and decent manner, without waddling from ſide to ſide, without turning either or both of their feet inward, without little jerks in their motion, or long ſtrides, or any of thoſe awkwardneſſes which continue with many perſons to old age, for want of having theſe irregularities corrected when they were young. Children ſhould be indulged in their ſports, ſometimes in running ſwiftly, and in leaping, where there is no danger, in order to exerciſe their limbs, and make them pliant and nimble, ſtrong and active, on all occaſions.

As to their arms and hands, they were formed, not to lie folded in the boſom, but to be engaged in ſome uſeful work;

and ſometimes, with due moderation, in robuſt and hardy exerciſe and toil; not ſo as to overſtrain their joints, but to acquire firmneſs of ſtrength by exerciſe.

More eſpecially, they who are to get their bread by their hands, ſhould be inured to toilſome and vigorous labours almoſt from their infancy. They ſhould be accuſtomed to work in heat and cold, and to bear rougher exerciſes and fatigues of body, that they may be fit to endure hardſhips, and go through thoſe difficulties to which their ſtation in life may call them, without any injury or inconveniency. And it is deſirable, that the ſons of all families ſhould be in ſome degree inured to ſuch difficulties as theſe, which men of all ranks are ſometimes called to encounter.

If ſome fond and tender mothers had brought up their children in this hardy manner, they had not now, in all human probability, been mourning over their graves. In their younger years, they would ſcarcely let them ſet the ſole of their foot to the ground, nor ſuffer the wind to blow upon them. Thus they grew up in a ſtate of tenderneſs and infirmity, ſickly and feeble creatures. A ſudden cold or heat ſeized them; their natures, which were never accuſtomed to bear hardſhip, were unable to reſiſt the enemy; a fever kindled in the blood, or a catarrh or cough injured the lungs, and early buried their parent's hopes in the duſt.

Thus I have finiſhed the ſecond general head of inſtruction, that is, children ſhould be inſtructed to exerciſe and improve their natural powers, both of mind and body. This is one neceſſary part of a good education, which parents and other teachers ſhould attend to betimes.

SECT. III.

Self Government.

CHILDREN ſhould be inſtructed in the art of ſelf government. They ſhould be taught, as far as poſſible, to govern their thoughts; to uſe their wills to be determined by the light of their underſtandings, and not by headſtrong and fooliſh humour; they ſhould learn to keep the lower powers of nature under the command of their reaſon. They ſhould be inſtructed to regulate their ſenſes, their imagination, their appetites, and their paſſions. Let it be obſerved that I ſpeak of theſe things in this place, not as a part of religion, though they are an important part of it, but give it as a direction exceedingly uſeful to all the purpoſes of human life in this world.

1. Their thoughts and fancies ſhould be brought under early government. Children ſhould be taught as far as poſſible to keep their thoughts and attention fixed upon what is their proper buſineſs; and to withhold them from roving and wandering away from the work in which they are engaged. Many children have ſuch wild fluttering fancies, that they will not be eaſily confined to fix upon one object for any conſiderable time. Every fluttering feather, every motion of any perſon or thing that is near them, every ſound, noiſe, or ſhadow, calls them away from their duty. When they ſhould employ their eyes on their book or their work, they will be gazing at every thing beſides their taſk; they muſt riſe often to the window to ſee what paſſes abroad, when their buſineſs is within.

This volatile humour, if not gently altered and wiſely corrected in early years, will have an unhappy influence to hinder them forever from attaining any great excellence in what ever buſineſs they undertake. Children ſhould be taught therefore to call in their wandering thoughts, and bind them to the work in hand, until they have gone through it and finiſhed it.

Yet this ſort of wandering folly ſhould not be chaſtiſed ſeverely in young children, nor ſhould it be ſubdued with violence, by too cloſe and rigorous a confinement to many long hours of labour or ſtudy, in that early and tender part of life. Such a conduct might break or overwhelm an active and ſprightly genius, and deſtroy all thoſe ſeeds of curioſity which promiſe well for future years. Proper and agreeable methods ſhould be uſed to perſuade and incline the young learner to attend to his preſent employment. It is far better to fix the thoughts to duty by allurement than by ſeverity; but ſome way or other it ought to be endeavoured, at leaſt in a good degree.

This fixedneſs of mind and active powers are not only of great ſervice to attain uſeful knowledge, or to learn any buſineſs in common life, but it is of conſiderable advantage in religion, in attendance on divine worſhip, either praying, preaching, or meditation; where the mind is ſubject to a thouſand diſtractions, for want of being taught to fix their attention in younger years. Perſons who have well learned the art of governing their thoughts, can purſue a train of thinking while they walk through the ſtreets of London, nor will the noiſe and hurry of that buſy place break the thread of their meditations. A happy attainment this, and a felicity which but few arrive at!

2. Children ſhould be alſo inſtructed to govern their inclinations and wiſhes, and to determine their wills and their choice of things, not by humour and wild fancy, but by the dictates of reaſon. Some perſons, even in their mature years, can give no other account why they chuſe and determine to do this or that, but becauſe they have a fancy for it, and they will do it. I will, becauſe I will, ſerves inſtead of all other reaſons. In the ſame manner they manage their refuſal or diſlike of any thing. I hate to do this thing; I will not go to this place, nor do that work; I am reſolved againſt it; and all from mere humour. This is a conduct very unbecoming a reaſonable creature; and this folly ſhould be corrected betimes, in our early parts of life, ſince God has given us underſtanding and reaſon to be the guide of our reſolutions, and to direct our choice and all our actions.

3. Appetite is another thing which ſhould be put under ſtrict government, and children ſhould be taught betimes to reſtrain it. That of the taſte is the firſt thing that gets the aſcendant in our younger years, and a guard ſhould be ſet upon it early. What an unbecoming thing it is for children to be craving after every diſh that comes to a table; and that they will generally do, if they have never been taught to bridle their craving. They muſt eat of all the pickles and ſauces and high ſeaſoned meats, and gorge themſelves with a medly of inconſiſtent dainties; and without any reſtraint, leſt little maſter ſhould be froward, or leſt little miſs ſhould grow out of humour with her dinner. How often do they make foul inroad on their health by exceſs of eating, being tempted farther than nature requires by a very luſcious bit which is within their ſight? How does this indulgence viciate their ſtomach, ruin their conſtitution, weaken the ſprings of nature, and deſtroy the powers of animal life betimes? How many graves are filled, and funeral vaults crowded with little carcaſes which have been brought to untimely death by the fooliſh, fondneſs of a parent or a nurſe, giving the young creatures

leave to eat every thing they deſire? or if they happen by ſtrength of conſtitution to ſurvive this peſtilence, how often do they grow up young gluttons, and place their happineſs in the ſatisfaction of the taſte? They are deaf to all the rules of virtue and abſtinence all their lives, becauſe they were never taught to deny themſelves when they were young. O it is a mean and ſhameful thing to be a ſlave to our taſte, and to let this brutal appetite ſubdue reaſon and govern the man! But if appetites muſt be gratified in the child, they will grow ſtrong in the years of youth, and a thouſand to one but they overpower the man alſo.

Let but fond parents humour their little offspring, and indulge their children to ſip wine frequently, and they will generally grow up to the love of it long before nature needs it; and by this mean they will imagine drams are daily neceſſary for their ſupport, by that time they are arrived at the age of man or woman. Thus nature is ſoon burnt up, and life pays for the deadly draught. The fountain of much gluttony and drunkenneſs, of many diſeaſes that ariſe from intemperance, and of many an untimely death, is laid in the nurſery.

An exceſs of niceneſs, in pleaſing the palate, is a fooliſh and dangerous humour, which ſhould never be encouraged by parents, ſince the plaineſt food is the moſt healthful for all perſons, but eſpecially for children; and in this reſpect they ſhould be under the conduct of their elders, and not always chuſe for themſelves. This conduct and diſcipline will train them up to virtue and ſelf denial, to temperance and frugality, to a reliſh of plain and wholeſome food, to the pleaſures of active health, and to a firm and cheerful old age.

The indulgence of a nice appetite in children is not only the reaſon why they are ſo often ſick, but at the ſame time it makes them ſo humourous and ſqueamiſh, that they can ſcarcely be perſuaded to ſwallow a medicine which is neceſſary for their recovery. What a long, tedious, and tireſome buſineſs it is to wait on ſome children hours together, while all the ſoft perſuaſions and flatteries of a mother cannot prevail with them to take a nauſeous ſpoonful, or a bitter *bolus*, though their life may depend upon it? They have been taught to make an idol of their taſte, and even in the view and peril of death, they can hardly be perſuaded to affront their idol, and diſpleaſe their palate with a draught, or even a pill, which diſguſts it.

There are other appetites, if I may ſo call them, beſide that of the taſte, which children are ready to indulge too far, if not limited and corrected by the wiſdom of the parents. Their eyes are never ſatisfied with ſeeing, nor their ears with hearing. Some young perſons cannot hear of a fine ſhow, but they muſt needs ſee it; nor can they be told of a concert of muſic, but they muſt needs hear it, though it creates an expenſe beyond their circumſtances, and may endanger their health or their virtue.

I confeſs freely, that I would recommend the ſight of uncommon things in nature and art, in government civil or military, to the curioſity of youth. If ſome ſtrange wild beaſts and birds are to be ſhown, if lions and eagles, oſtriches and elephants, pelicans or rhinoceroſes, are brought into our land, if an ingenious model of Soloman's temple, or ſome nice and admirable clock work, engines, or moving pictures, &c, be made a ſpectacle to the ingenious; if a king be crowned, or a public triumph proceed through the ſtreets; when an army is reviewed by a prince, when an embaſſador makes a public entry, or when there is a public trial of criminals before a judge, I will readily allow theſe ſights are worthy the attendance of the younger part of mankind; once at leaſt, where it may be done with ſafety, and without too great hazard or expenſe. Moſt of theſe are things which are not often repeated, and it is fit the curioſity of the eyes ſhould be ſo far gratified, as to give people, once in their lives, an opportunity of knowing what theſe things are, that their minds may be furniſhed with uſeful ideas of the world of nature and art, and with ſome notion of the great and uncommon ſcenes and appearances of the civil life. But for children to haunt every public ſpectacle, to attend with conſtancy every lord mayor's ſhow, to ſeize every opportunity of repeating theſe ſights, ſuffering nothing to eſcape them that may pleaſe their ſenſes, and this too often without any regard to their religion, their virtue, or their health, this is a vanity which ought to be reſtrained by thoſe to whom God and nature have committed the care of their inſtruction, and who have a juſt and natural authority over them. But of this, and ſome other ſubjects akin to it, I may have occaſion to ſpeak more in the following parts of this diſcourſe, when I profeſſedly treat on the article of reſtraint.

Thus I have ſhown how the appetites and inclinations of children ſhould be put under diſcipline, and how they may be taught ſelf government in this reſpect.

4. The paſſions or affections are the laſt thing which I ſhall mention; theſe appear very early in children to want a regulation and government. They love and hate too raſhly, and with too much vehemence; they grieve and rejoice too violently and on the ſudden, and that for mere trifles; their hopes and fears, their deſires and their averſions, are preſently raiſed to too high a pitch, and upon very ſlight and inſufficient grounds. It becomes a wiſe parent to watch over theſe young emotions of their ſouls, and put in a word of prudent caution, as often as they obſerve theſe irregularities.

Let children be taught early, that the little things for which they are ſo zealous, for which they grieve or rejoice ſo impetuouſly, are not worthy of theſe affections of their ſouls; ſhow them the folly of being ſo fond of theſe trifles, and of vexing and growing fretful for the loſs of them. Inform them what a happineſs it is to have few deſires and few averſions, for this will preſerve them from a multitude of ſorrows, and keep their temper always ſerene and calm; perſuade them never to raiſe their hopes very high of things in this world, and then they will never meet with great diſappointments. Teach them moderation in all theſe workings of their ſpirits; and inform them, that their paſſions ſhould never be laid out thus on objects which do not deſerve them, nor riſe higher than the occaſion requires.

Teach baſhful and timorous children, that they need be aſhamed of nothing but what is evil; that they ſhould fear God in the firſt place, and ſerve him, and then they need not be afraid of men, or if any thing that threatens miſchief to them; for the Almighty God will be their friend and defence. Engage their fear and their love in the firſt place on God, the moſt proper and ſupreme object of them; let their hope, their joys, and their ſorrows as ſoon as poſſible, be tinctured with religion; ſet their young affections at work on the moſt needful and important objects of them in early life, and this will have a ſweet and powerful influence on the better regulation of them with regard to all ſenſible things.

Above all, let them know that they muſt govern their anger, and not let it break out on every ſlight occaſion. It is anger that is eminently called paſſion among children, and in the language of common life. This therefore ſhould eminently have a conſtant guard ſet upon it. Show them how unreaſonable and unmanly a thing it is to take fire at every little provocation, how honourable and glorious to forgive an injury; how much like God, and like the beſt of men. Let them know what SOLOMON would inform them, that the patient in ſpirit is better than the proud in ſpirit; that he who is ſlow to anger, is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his ſpirit, better than he that taketh a city. Teach them to put away their little quarrels and reſentments, and to forget and bury them in love. Let them be put in mind, that though anger may happen to riſe a little in a good man, yet it reſts and abides only in the boſom of a fool; and therefore they ſhould never grow ſullen, nor let the ſun go down upon their wrath.

The occaſions of childiſh reſentment, and the riſings of anger, are ready to return often, and therefore they ſhould often have ſuch warnings given them and ſuch inſtructions repeated. Tell them how lovely a thing it is to be meek and free from paſſion, and how much ſuch children are beloved of all. Inſtruct them how much it tends to their own peace, to ſuffer nothing to ruffle and diſcompoſe them. When their little hearts are ready to ſwell and grow big within them, and their wrath takes ſudden fire, put in ſome pretty ſoft word to cure the return of this inward ſwelling, to quench the new flame that is kindling in their boſom, and to aſſuage the riſing ſtorm. Teach them to get by degrees an habitual conqueſt over this diſorder of nature in youth, and you will lay a foundation for their deliverance from a thouſand miſchiefs in the following years and events of life.

This ſhall ſuffice for the third head of inſtruction, which relates to ſelf government. I have dwelt the longer upon it, becauſe it is of ſo great and evident importance towards the eaſe and happineſs of life, as well as ſo conſiderable a part of religion; and men can hardly ever get ſo ſucceſsful a victory over themſelves, unleſs they begin when they are children.

SECT.

SECT. IV.

The common Arts of Reading and Writing.

THE next thing that I ſhall mention as a matter of inſtruction for children, is the common arts of reading, ſpelling, and writing.

Writing is almoſt a divine art, whereby thoughts may be communicated without a voice, and underſtood without hearing; to theſe I would add ſome ſmall knowledge of arithmetic or accounts, as the practice of it is in a manner ſo univerſal in our age, that it does almoſt neceſſarily belong to a tolerable education.

The knowledge of letters, is one of the greateſt bleſſings that ever God beſtowed on the children of men; by this mean, mankind are enabled to preſerve the memory of things done in their own times, and to lay up a rich treaſure of knowledge for all ſucceeding generations.

By the art of reading, we learn a thouſand things which our own thoughts would never have reached to; we are inſtructed by books in the wiſdom of ancient ages; we learn what our anceſtors have ſaid and done, and enjoy the benefit of the wiſe and judicious remarks which they have made through their whole courſe of life, without the fatigue of their long and painful experiments. By this mean children may be led, in a great meaſure, into the wiſdom of old age. It is by the art of reading that we can ſit at home, and acquaint ourſelves with what has been done in the diſtant parts of the world. The hiſtories and the cuſtoms of all ages and all nations are brought, as it were to our doors. By this art we are let into the knowledge of the affairs of the Jews, the Greeks, and the Romans, their wars, their laws, and their religion; and we can tell what they did in the nations of Europe, Aſia, and Africa, above a thouſand years ago.

But the greateſt bleſſing we derive from reading, is the knowledge of the Holy Scriptures, wherein God has conveyed down to us the diſcoveries of his wiſdom, power and grace, through many paſt ages; and whereby we attain the knowledge of Chriſt, and of the way of ſalvation by a Mediator.

It muſt be confeſſed, that, in former ages, before printing was invented, the art of reading was not ſo common even in polite nations, becauſe books were much more coſtly, ſince they muſt be all written with a pen, and were therefore hardly to be obtained by the bulk of mankind; but ſince the providence of God has brought *printing* into the world, and knowlege is ſo plentifully diffuſed through our nation at ſo cheap a rate, it is a pity that any children ſhould be born and brought up in *Great Britain* without the ſkill of reading; and eſpecially ſince by this mean, every one may ſee with his own eyes, what God requires of him in order to eternal happineſs.

The art of writing alſo is ſo exceedingly uſeful, and is now grown ſo very common, that the greateſt part of children may attain it at an eaſy rate; by this mean we communicate our thoughts and all our affairs to our friends at ever ſo great a diſtance; we tell them our wants, our ſorrows, and our joys, and intereſt them in our concerns, as though they were near us. We maintain correſpondence and traffic with perſons in diſtant nations, and the wealth and grandeur of *Great Britain* is maintained by this mean. By the art of writing, we treaſure up all things that concern us in a ſafe repoſitory; and as often as we pleaſe, by conſulting our paper records, we renew our remembrance of things that relate to this life or the life to come; and why ſhould any of the children of men be debarred from this privilege, if it may be attained at a cheap and eaſy rate, without intrenching upon other duties of life, and without omitting any more neceſſary buſineſs that may belong to their ſtation?

I might add here alſo, true ſpelling is ſuch a part of knowledge as children ought to be acquainted with, ſince it is a matter of ſhame and ridicule in ſo polite an age as ours, when perſons who have learned to handle the pen cannot write three words together without a miſtake or blunder; and when they put letters together in ſuch an awkward and ignorant manner, that it is hard to make ſenſe of them, or to tell what they mean.

Arithmetic, or the art of numbers, is, as was obſerved before, to be reckoned alſo a neceſſary part of a good education. Without ſome degrees of this knowledge, there is indeed no traffic among men. And eſpecially is it more needful at preſent, ſince the world deals much more upon truſt and credit than it did in former times; and therefore the art of keeping accounts is made, in ſome meaſure, neceſſary to perſons even in meaner ſtations of life, below the rank of merchants or great traders. A little knowledge of the art of accounts is alſo needful, in ſome degree, in order to take a true ſurvey, and make a juſt judgment of the common expenſes of a perſon or a family; but this part of learning, in the various degrees of it, is more or leſs uſeful and needful, according to the different ſtations and buſineſſes for which children are deſigned.

As the ſons of a family ſhould be educated in the knowledge of writing, reading, ſpelling, and accounts, ſo neither ſhould the daughters be trained up without them. Reading is as needful for one ſex as the other; nor ſhould girls be forbidden to handle the pen, or to caſt up a few figures, ſince it may be very much for their advantage in almoſt all circumſtances of life, except in the very loweſt rank of ſervitude or hard labour. And I beg leave here to entreat the female youth, eſpecially thoſe of better circumſtances in the world, to maintain their ſkill in writing which they have already learned, by taking every occaſion to exerciſe it; and I would fain perſuade them to take pains in acquainting themſelves with true ſpelling, the want of which is one reaſon why many of them are aſhamed to write; and they are not aſhamed to own and declare this, as though it were a juſt and ſufficient excuſe for neglecting and loſing the uſe of the pen.

SECT. V.

Of a Trade or Employment.

IN a good education it is required alſo that children, in the common ranks of life, be brought up to the knowledge of ſome proper buſineſs or employment for their lives; ſome trade or traffic, artifice or manufacture, by which they may be enabled to provide for their families in due time. In ſome of the eaſtern nations, even perſons of the higheſt rank are obliged to be educated in ſome employment or profeſſion; and perhaps that practice has many advantages in it; it engages their younger years in labour and diligence, and ſecures from the miſchievous effects of ſloth, idleneſs, vanity, and a thouſand temptations.

In our nation I confeſs it is a cuſtom to educate the children of noblemen, and the eldeſt ſons of the gentry, to no proper buſineſs or profeſſion, but only to an acquaintance with ſome of the ornaments and accompliſhments of life, which I ſhall mention immediately. But perhaps it would be far happier for ſome families, if the ſons were brought up to buſineſs and kept to the practice of it, than to have them expoſed to the pernicious inconveniences of a ſauntering and idle life, and the more violent impulſe of all the corrupt inclinations of youth.

However, it is certain that far the greater part of mankind muſt bring up their children to ſome regular buſineſs and profeſſion, whereby they may ſuſtain their lives and ſupport a family, and become uſeful members to a ſtate. Now in the choice of ſuch a profeſſion or employment for children, many things are to be conſulted.

1. The circumſtances and eſtate of the parent; whether it will reach to place out the child as an apprentice, to provide for him materials for his buſineſs or trade, and to ſupport him till he ſhall be able to maintain himſelf by his profeſſion. Sometimes the ambition of the parent and the child, hath fixed on a trade far above their circumſtances; in conſequence of which the child hath been expoſed to many inconveniences, and the parent to many ſorrows.

2. The capacity and talents of the child muſt alſo be conſidered. If it be a profeſſion of hard labour; hath the child a healthy and firm conſtitution, and ſtrength of body equal to the work? If it be a profeſſion that requires the exerciſe of fancy, ſkill, and judgment, or much ſtudy and contrivance; then the queſtion will be, hath the lad a genius capable of thinking well, a bright imagination, a ſolid judgment? Is he able to endure ſuch application of mind as is neceſſary for the employment.

3. The temper and inclination of the child muſt be brought into this conſultation, in order to determine a proper buſineſs for life. If the daily labour and buſineſs of a man be not agreeable to him, he can never hope to manage it with any great advantage or ſucceſs. I knew a bricklayer, who profeſſed that he had always an averſion to the ſmell of mortar; and I was acquainted once with a lad who began to learn Greek at ſchool, but he complained it did not agree with his conſtitution. I think the firſt of theſe ought to have been

brought up to work in glaſs or timber, or any thing rather than in bricks; as for the other, to my beſt remembrance, he was wiſely diſpoſed of to a calling wherein he had nothing to do with Greek.

And here I would beg leave to deſire, that none might be encouraged to purſue any of the learned profeſſions, that is, divinity, law, and phyſic, who have not the ſigns of a good genius, who are not patient of long attention and cloſe application to ſtudy, who have not a peculiar delight of that profeſſion which they chuſe, and with all a pretty firm conſtitution of body; for much ſtudy is a wearineſs to the fleſh, and the vigour of nature is ſooner impaired by laborious thoughtfulneſs than by the labour of the limbs.

4. It ſhould be alſo the ſolicitous and conſtant care of parents, when they place out their children in the world, to ſeek out maſters for them who profeſs ſerious religion, who practiſe all moral virtues, and keep good orders and good hours in their family. The neglect of this concern has been the ruin of a thouſand youths in our day; and notwithſtanding the ſenſible miſchiefs ariſing from this negligence, yet there is ſtill too little care taken in a matter of ſo great importance.*

Thus much for this part of the education of ſons. But you will ſay then, what buſineſs of life muſt daughters be brought up to? I muſt confeſs when I have ſeen ſo many of this ſex, who have lived well in the time of their childhood, grievouſly expoſed to many hardſhips and poverty upon the death of their parents, I have often wiſhed there were more of the callings or employments of life peculiarly appropriated to women, and that they were regularly educated in them, that there might be a better proviſion made for their ſupport. What if all the garments which are worn by women, were ſo limited and reſtrained in the manufacture of them, that they ſhould all be made only by their own ſex? This would go a great way toward relief in this caſe ; and what if ſome of the eaſier labours of life were reſerved for them only ? But this is not my province.

---

* *This danger ariſes in a great degree from the immoderate love of pleaſures, that ſo generally prevails, and leads maſters into parties and engagements, eſpecially on the Lord's day; which not only occaſions the neglect of religious inſtruction and family prayer on the evening of it, but ſets an example to ſervants which they think themſelves authorized to follow, though it be generally to their own deſtruction.*

However it may be as to this matter, it is the cuſtom of the nation, and indeed it hath been the cuſtom of moſt nations and ages, to educate daughters in the knowledge of things that relate to the affairs of the houſehold, to ſpin and to uſe the needle, both for making garments and for the ornaments of embroidery ; they have been generally employed in the preparation of food, in the regular diſpoſal of the affairs of the houſe for the conveniences and accommodations of human life, in the furniture of the rooms, and the elegancies of entertainment. ‘ Sarah made ready three meaſures of meal and kneaded it, and made cakes upon the hearth, Gen. xviii. 6. And the women of Iſrael that were wiſe hearted, did ſpin with their hands, both blue, and purple, and ſcarlet, and fine linen, for the tabernacle, Exod. xxxv. 25. Women ſhall bake your bread, Lev. xxvi. 16. Women ſew pillows and make kerchiefs, ’ Ezek. xii. 18. which words, though perhaps they are a metaphor in that text, yet denote the office or work of women. ‘ And Dorcas made coats and garments for the poor, ’ Acts ix. 36, 39. I might cite many ancient heathen authors to prove the ſame thing among the Greeks and Romans, if it were needful.

Some of theſe things are the conſtant labours and cares of women in our day, whereby they maintain themſelves ; the moſt laborious parts of them belong to the poor. And it is the opinion of the beſt judges, that, even in ſuperiour and wealthy circumſtances, every daughter ſhould be ſo far inſtructed in them, as to know when they are performed aright, that the ſervant may not uſurp too much power, and impoſe on the ignorance of the miſtreſs. Nature and providence ſeem to have deſigned theſe offices for the ſex in all ages and in all nations, becauſe while the men are engaged in harder and more robuſt labours, and are often called abroad on buſineſs, the women are more generally accuſtomed to keep houſe and dwell at home ; and the word of God, as well as the cuſtom of human life, recommends it, Tit. ii. 5. 1 Tim. v. 14.

SECT. VI.

Rules of Prudence.

ALL children ſhould have ſome inſtruction given them in the conduct of human life, ſome neceſſary rules of prudence, by which they may regulate the management of their own affairs, and their behaviour towards their fellow creatures. Where all other ſorts of knowledge are conferred upon children, if this be wanting, they make but a contemptible figure in the world, and plunge themſelves into many inconveniences.

Some of theſe rules of prudence are of a general nature, and neceſſary at all times, and upon all occaſions; others are more particular, and proper to be uſed according to the various occurrences of life.

If I were to inquire what are the foundations of human prudence, I ſhould rank them under theſe three heads.

1. A knowledge of ourſelves. Here every one ſhould be taught to conſider within himſelf, what is my temper and natural inclination; what are my moſt powerful appetites and my prevailing paſſions; what are my chief talents and capacities, if I have any at all; what are the weakneſſes and follies to which I am moſt liable, eſpecially in the days of youth; what are the temptations and dangers that attend me; what are my circumſtances in the world; and what my various relations to mankind round about me; what are my conſtant, and what my occaſional duties; what are the inward or outward advantages that attend me, or the diſadvantages under which I labour. A wiſe and juſt ſurvey of all theſe things, and keeping them always in mind, will be of unſpeakable uſe to us in the conduct of life, that we may ſet our chief guard upon our weak ſide, and where our greateſt dangers lie; that we may employ our talents aright, and ſeize all advantages to improve them for the beſt purpoſe, and proceed in the ſhorteſt way to piety, uſefulneſs, and peace.

2. The knowledge of mankind is alſo neceſſary to acquire prudence. And here young perſons ſhould not only be taught what is the general nature and capacity, the virtues and the vices, and the follies of mankind; but they ſhould be inform-

ed alſo or at leaſt ſhould be taught to obſerve more particularly, what are the peculiar tempers, appetites, paſſions, powers, good and evil qualities of the perſons with whom they have moſt to do in the world; that they may learn to behave wiſely with regard to others, and that they may make a proper improvement of all the brighter and darker characters which they obſerve amongſt men, both for their own advantage and for the benefit of their fellow creatures. This may have a happy influence to lead them to avoid the vices and follies which have plunged others into miſchief, to imitate the virtues of thoſe who have behaved well in life, and to ſecure themſelves from any dangers and miſeries, as well as to pity the weakneſſes and ſorrows of mankind, and afford them a willing and cheerful relief.

3. The knowledge of the things of the world, and the various affairs of human life, muſt be included as one of the chief foundations of prudence. It would be endleſs to run over particulars of this kind; but in a ſpecial manner young perſons ſhould apply themſelves to know thoſe things which moſt nearly concern them, and which have the moſt immediate relation to their own buſineſs and duty, to their own intereſt and welfare; and it is a valuable part of wiſdom to neglect other things, and not to waſte our time and ſpirits in them, when they ſtand in any competition with our proper and moſt important work, whether we conſider ourſelves as men or as chriſtians.

Solomon tells us, Eccleſ. iii. 1. 17. and viii. 5, 6. 'There is both time and judgment for every work, and for every purpoſe under the heaven; and that a wiſe man's heart diſcerneth both time and judgment;' that is, he judgeth well concerning what is to be done, and the time when to do it; and therefore 'the miſery of man is great upon him,' becauſe he knows not this time and judgment, he doth neither diſcern what is proper to be done, nor the proper ſeaſon of doing it. Prudence conſiſts in judging well what is to be ſaid, and what is to be done, on every new occaſion; when to lie ſtill, and when to be active; when to keep ſilence, and when to ſpeak; what to avoid, and what to purſue; how to act in every difficulty; what means to make uſe of to compaſs ſuch an end; how to behave in every circumſtance of life, and in all companies; how to gain the favour of mankind in order to promote our own happineſs, and to do the moſt ſervice to God and the moſt good to men, according to that ſtation we poſſeſs, and thoſe opportunities which we enjoy.

For this purpoſe there is no book better than the Proverbs of SOLOMON. Several of the firſt chapters ſeem to be written for young men, under the name of SOLOMON's ſon; and all the reſt of them ſhould be made familiar to youth by their frequent converſe with them, and treaſuring them up in their head and heart.

Among human writings of this kind, perhaps the book called *Eccleſiaſticus*, though it be among the apocryphal writings, is equal to the beſt of the ancients. And among the moderns, I know not a better collection than the little book of directions, counſels, and advices, lately publiſhed by Dr. FULLER for the uſe of his ſon; though I could wiſh he had rendered it univerſally acceptable to all readers, by avoiding ſome ſeverities on the other ſex; and that he had ſpared his little railleries on the name of ſaints, though thoſe offenſive ſentences are but few.

SECT. VII.

The Ornaments and Accompliſhments of Life.

THE laſt part of inſtruction which I include in the idea of a good education, is an inſtruction of youth in ſome of the uſeful ornaments and accompliſhments of life.

It has been the cuſtom of our nation, for perſons of the middle and lower ranks of life, who deſign their children for trades and manufactures, to ſend them to the Latin and Greek ſchools. There they wear out four or five years of time in learning a number of ſtrange words, that will be of very little uſe to them in all the following affairs of their ſtation; and this very learning alſo, is generally taught in a very tireſome and moſt irrational method, when they are forced to learn Latin by grammars and rules written in that unknown tongue. When they leave the ſchool they uſually forget what they have learned, and the chief advantage they gain by it, is to ſpell and pronounce hard words better than when they meet them in Engliſh; whereas this ſkill of ſpelling might be attained in a far ſhorter time and at an eaſier rate by other methods,* and much of life might be ſaved and improved to better purpoſes.

---

* *See my Art of Reading and Writing, chap.* xxi.

As for the ſons of thoſe who enjoy more plentiful circumſtances in the world, they may be inſtructed in the Latin and Greek languages for ſeveral valuable ends in their ſtation; and eſpecially thoſe who deſign the learned profeſſions, ought thoroughly to underſtand them; and ſuch as purſue the ſtudy of divinity muſt be acquainted alſo with Hebrew and Chaldee, that they may read the Old Teſtament in its original language as well as the New.

The French is now a days eſteemed alſo an accompliſhment to both ſexes. If they have time enough, which they know not how to employ better, and a good memory, I would not forbid it. There are ſeveral good books written in that language which are not unworthy of our peruſal; and there are many words now introduced in the Engliſh language, borrowed and derived from thence, as well as from the Latin and Greek; ſo that it may not be improper for an Engliſh gentleman to learn theſe tongues, that he may underſtand his own the better. I add alſo, that if perſons have much acquaintance with the French nation, or have occaſion to converſe with foreigners at court or in the city, or if they deſign to travel abroad, the French is a neceſſary tongue, becauſe it is ſo often ſpoken in Europe, and eſpecially in courts. But otherwiſe, there are ſo many of the valuable writings of French authors perpetually tranſlated into Engliſh, that it is a needleſs thing to go through much difficulty, or take much pains in attaining it. I am inclined to believe that, except in the caſes above mentioned, few have found the profit anſwer the labour. As for thoſe perſons who are bred up to traffic with other nations, they muſt neceſſarily learn the language of thoſe nations; and this I reckon not among their accompliſhments, but conſider it as rather a part of their proper buſineſs in life.

In ſhort, it is a thing of far greater value and importance, that youth ſhould be perfectly well ſkilled in reading, writing, and ſpeaking their native tongue in a proper, a polite and graceful manner, than in toiling among foreign languages. It is of more worth and advantage to gentlemen and ladies to have an exact knowledge of what is decent, juſt, and elegant in Engliſh, than to be a critic in foreign tongues. The very knowledge of foreign words ſhould be improved to this purpoſe; and in order to obtain this accompliſhment, they ſhould frequently converſe with thoſe perſons and books which are eſteemed polite and elegant in their kind, Thus far concerning the knowledge of words. But the knowledge of things is of much more importance.

1. The young gentry of both ſexes ſhould be a little acquainted with logic, that they may learn to obtain clear ideas; to judge by reaſon and the nature of things; to baniſh the prejudices of infancy, cuſtom, and humour; to argue cloſely and juſtly on any ſubject; and to caſt their thoughts and affairs into a proper and eaſy method.

2. Several parts of mathematical learning are alſo neceſſary ornaments of the mind, and not without real advantage; and many of theſe are ſo agreeable to the fancy, that youth will be entertained and pleaſed in acquiring the knowledge of them.

Beſides the common ſkill in accounts which is needful for a trader, there is a variety of pretty and uſeful rules and practices in arithmetic, to which a gentleman ſhould be no ſtranger; and if his genius lie that way, a little inſight into algebra would be no diſadvantage to him. It is fit that young people of any figure in the world, ſhould ſee ſome of the ſprings and clues whereby ſkilful men, by plain rules of reaſon, trace out the moſt deep, diſtant, and hidden queſtions; and whereby they find certain anſwers to thoſe enquiries, which at firſt view ſeem to lie without the ken of mankind, and beyond the reach of human knowledge. It was for want of a little more general acquaintance with mathematical learning in the world, that a good algebriaſt and a geometer were counted conjurors a century ago, and people applied to them to ſeek for loſt horſes and ſtolen goods.

They ſhould know ſomething of geometry, ſo far at leaſt as to underſtand the names of the various lines and angles, ſurfaces and ſolids; to know what is meant by a right line or a curve, a right angle and an oblique, whether acute or obtuſe; how the quantity of angles is meaſured, what is a circle, a ſemicircle, an arch, a quadrant, a degree and minute, a diameter and a radius: What we mean by a triangle, a ſquare, a parallelogram, a polygon, a cube, a pyramid, a priſm, a cone, an ellipſis or oval, an hyperbola, &c. and to know ſome of the moſt general properties of angles, ſquares, and circles, &c. The world is now grown ſo learned in mathematical ſcience, that this ſort of language is often uſed in common writings, and in converſation, far beyond what it was in the days of our fathers. And beſides, without ſome knowledge of this kind, we cannot make any farther progreſs towards an acquaintance with the arts of ſurveying, meaſuring, geography, and aſtronomy, which are ſo entertaining and ſo uſeful an accompliſhment to perſons of a polite education.

Geography and aſtronomy are exceedingly delightful ſtudies. The knowledge of the lines and circles of the globes, of heaven and earth, is counted ſo neceſſary in our age, that no perſon of either ſex is now eſteemed to have an elegant education without it. Even tradeſmen and the actors in common life ſhould, in my opinion, in their younger years, learn ſomething of theſe ſciences, inſtead of vainly wearing out ſeven years of drudgery in Greek and Latin.

It is of conſiderable advantage as well as delight for mankind, to know a litttle of the earth on which they dwell, and of the ſtars and ſkies that ſurround them on all ſides. It is almoſt neceſſary for young perſons, who pretend to any thing of inſtruction and ſchooling above the loweſt rank of people, to get a little acquaintance with the ſeveral parts of the land and the ſea, that they may know in what quarter of the world the chief cities and countries are ſituated; that at the mention of the word *Copenhagen*, they may not groſsly blunder and expoſe themſelves, as a certain gentleman once did, by ſuppoſing it to be the name of a Dutch commander. Without this knowledge we cannot read any hiſtory with profit, nor ſo much as underſtand the common newſpapers.

It is neceſſary alſo to know ſomething of the heavenly bodies, and their various motions and periods of revolution, that we may underſtand the accounts of time in paſt ages, and the hiſtories of ancient nations, as well as know the reaſons of day and night, ſummer and winter; and the various appearances and places of the moon and other planets. Then we ſhall not be terrified at every eclipſe, or preſage, and foretel public deſolations at the ſight of a comit; we ſhall ſee the ſun covered with darkneſs, and the full moon deprived of her light, without foreboding imaginations that the government is in danger, or that the world is come to an end. This will not only increaſe rational knowledge, and guard us againſt fooliſh and ridiculous fears, but it will amuſe the mind moſt agreeably; and it has a moſt happy tendency to raiſe in our thoughts the nobleſt and moſt magnificent ideas of God by the ſurvey of his works, in their ſurpriſing grandeur and divine artifice.

3. Natural philoſophy, at leaſt in the more general principles and foundations of it, ſhould be infuſed into the minds of youth. This is a very bright ornament of our rational natures, which are inclined to be inquiſitive into the cauſes and reaſon of things. A courſe of philoſophical experiments is now frequently attended by ladies as well as gentlemen, with no ſmall pleaſure and improvement. God and religion may be better known, and clearer ideas may be obtained of the amazing wiſdom of the Creator, and of the glories of the life to come, as well as of the things of this life, by the rational learning and the knowledge of nature that is now ſo much in vogue. If I were to recommend a book or two on this ſubject, which may uſefully be read by ladies as well as gentlemen, I know none better than RAY's Wiſdom of God in the Creation, Dr. DERHAM's Diſcourſes on the ſame ſubject, the Archbiſhop of *Cambray's* Treatiſe of the Exiſtence of God, at leaſt to the fiftieth ſection, NIEUNENTEIT's Religious Philoſopher, and Dr. MATHER's Chriſtian Philoſopher. Theſe things will enlarge and refine the underſtanding, improve the judgment, and bring the faculty of reaſoning into a juſt exerciſe, even on all manner of ſubjects.

4. Hiſtory is another accompliſhment of youth and ornament of education. The narratives of the various occurrences in nations, as well as in the lives of particular perſons, ſlide into younger minds with pleaſure. Theſe will furniſh the ſoul with a treaſure of knowledge, whence to derive uſeful obſervations, inferences and rules of conduct. Theſe will enable us to gratify our acquaintance, by rehearſing ſuch narrations at proper ſeaſons, and render our own company agreeable and uſeful to mankind.

5. Nor can our education be called completely elegant, without ſomething of poeſy in ſo very polite an age as this.

While I mention ſome knowledge of poeſy, as a proper ornament of youth, I would not be underſtood as though I recommended verſe making to every young gentleman and lady. It is an old proverb, that poets are born, and not made. And though I have been too far betrayed by an unguarded inclination, into attempts of this kind, in ſome of my former years, yet while I ſometimes repent of having laid out ſo many days and hours of a ſhort life in writing verſes, I will not encourage others to practiſe it, unleſs they are bleſt with a brighter genius, and find an inſuperable bent and bias of ſoul that way; and even then, let it be a diverſion and not a buſineſs.

The thing therefore, which I here recommend to perſons of a polite education, is ſome acquaintance with good verſe. To read it in the beſt authors, to learn to know, and taſte, and feel a fine ſtanza, as well as hear it, and to treaſure up ſome of the richeſt ſentiments and expreſſions of the moſt admired writers, is all I mean in this advice.

Nor is this a mere amuſement or uſeleſs embroidery of the mind. It brightens and animates the fancy with a thouſand beautiful images, it enriches the ſoul with many great and ſublime ſentiments and refined ideas, it fills the memory with a noble variety of language, and furniſhes the tongue with ſpeech and expreſſion ſuited to every ſubject. It teaches the art of deſcribing well, and of painting every thing to the life, and dreſſing up all the pleaſing and the frightful ſcenes of nature and providence, virtue and vice, in their proper charms and horrours. It aſſiſts us in the art of perſuaſion, it leads us into a pathetic manner of ſpeech and writing, and adds life and beauty to converſation.

How often have we been enabled to gild a gloomy hour of life, and to ſoften a rough and painful occurrence, by meditating and repeating the lines of ſome great poet? Between the colours and the harmony that belong to verſe, our ſenſes and our ſouls are ſometimes ſweetly entertained in a ſolitary retirement; and ſometimes we entertain our friends agreeably, we regale them as with muſic and painting at once, and gladden the whole company.

But poetry has ſtill ſome ſublimer powers. It raiſes our dying religion to a heavenly degree, and kindles a flame of holy love and joy in the heart. If the memory be well ſtored with devout ſongs, we ſhall never be at a loſs for divine meditation; we may exalt the praiſes of God and our Saviour at all times, and feel our ſouls borne up as on the wings of angels, far above this duſky globe of earth, until we have loſt all its flattering vanities and its painful vexations. Poeſy was firſt deſigned for the ſervice of religion, and dedicated to the temple, MOSES and DAVID made divine and illuſtrious uſe of it. The royal pſalmiſt is raiſed on the wing of inſpiration and ſacred verſe, far above the level of the Jewiſh ceremonies and ſhadows, and converſes with heavenly things, and ſheds abroad the glories of the future Meſſiah, amidſt the raptures of this ſublime and inimitable poeſy.

But it is time to deſcend and mention ſome of the accompliſhments of animal nature. The firſt of this kind, and perhaps the neareſt to poeſy, is the art of ſinging. A moſt charming gift of the God of nature, and deſigned for the ſolace of our ſorrows and the improvement of our joys. Thoſe young perſons who are bleſt with a muſical ear and voice, ſhould have ſome inſtruction beſtowed on them, that they may acquire this delightful ſkill. I am ſorry that the greateſt part of our ſongs, whereby young gentlemen and ladies are taught to practiſe this art, are of the amorous kind, and ſome of them polluted too. Will no happy genius lend a helping hand to reſcue muſic from all its defilements, and to furniſh the tongue with a nobler and more refined melody? But ſinging muſt not be named alone.

Various harmony, both of the wind and ſtring, were once in uſe in divine worſhip, and that by divine appointment. It is certain then, that the uſe of theſe inſtruments in common life is no unlawful practice, though the New Teſtament has not ordained the uſe of it in evangelical worſhip. But if the voice be happily capable of this art, it is preferable to all inſtruments faſhioned and compoſed by man. This is an organ formed and tuned by God himſelf. It is moſt eaſily kept in exerciſe, the ſkill is retained longeſt, and the pleaſure tranſcends all the reſt. Where an ode, of noble and ſeraphic compoſure, is ſet throughout to muſic, and ſung by an artful voice, while the ſpirit at the ſame time enjoys a devout temper, the joys of the ſoul and ſenſe are united, and it approaches to the ſcriptural ideas of the celeſtial ſtate. Happy the youth, who has a bright and harmonious conſtitution, with a pious turn of ſoul, a cheerful ſpirit and a reliſh of ſacred harmony! He takes a frequent flight above this lower world, beyond the regions of ſenſe and time. He joins the concert of the heavenly inhabitants, and ſeems to anticipate the buſineſs and the bleſſedneſs of eternity.

Shall I be allowed after this, to mention drawing and painting as agreeable amuſements of polite youth? Where the genius leads that way, it is a noble diverſion, and improves the mind. Nature has her ſhare in this, as well as in poeſy. Where nature inclines, let polite youth be taught to ſketch a little on paper. Let them have at leaſt ſome taſte of theſe arts, ſome capacity of being pleaſed with a curious draught, a noble painting, an elegant ſtatue, and fine reſemblances of nature. This is a graceful and an ingenious acquirement. Mr. Richardson's Eſſay, on the Theory of Painting, is the beſt book that I know on that ſubject, and is ſufficient to give a young gentleman a general knowledge of the art.

Shall I now mention the art of fencing and of riding the managed horſe, as an accompliſhment for gentlemen? Theſe are exerciſes of a healthy kind, and may be uſeful in human life. Shall I ſpeak of dancing, as a modiſh accompliſhment of both ſexes? I confeſs, I know no evil in it. This alſo is a healthful exerciſe, and it gives young perſons a decent manner of appearance in company. It may be profitable to ſome good purpoſes, if it be well guarded againſt all the abuſes and temptations that may attend it. It was uſed of old in ſacred and civil rejoicings, Exod, xv. 20, 21. 2 Sam. vi. 14. 1 Sam. xviii. 6. It is certainly an advantage to have the body formed early to graceful motion, to which the art of dancing may have contributed. But where it is much beloved and indulged, it has moſt ſenſible dangers, eſpecially mixed dancing. It leads youth too early and too often into company. It may create too much forwardneſs and aſſurance in the ſex whoſe chief glory is their modeſty. It may kindle vain and vicious inclinations, and raiſe in young minds too great a fondneſs for the exceſſive gaities and licentious pleaſures of the age.

In all theſe affairs a wiſe parent will keep a watchful eye upon the child, while he indulges it in theſe gratifications of youth and inclination. A wiſe parent will daily obſerve, whether the ſon or the little daughter begin to be too much solici charmed with any of the gay ornaments, and amuſements of tud life; and, with a prudent and ſecret ſo^er^litude, will take care leſt any of them intrench on the more neceſſary and important duties of life and religion. According to this view of , things, the parent's hand will either give a looſer reign to the rein purſuit of theſe exerciſes, or will manage the propenſities of the child with a needful and becoming reſtraint.

But, among all the accompliſhments of youth, there is none preferable to a decent and agreeable behaviour among men, a modeſt freedom of ſpeech, a ſoft and elegant manner of addreſs, a graceful and lovely deportment, a cheerful gravity and good humour, with a mind appearing ever ſerene under the ruffling accidents of human life. Add to this, a pleaſing ſolemnity and reverence, when the diſcourſe turns upon any thing ſacred and divine, a becoming neglect of injuries, a hatred of calumny and ſlander, a habit of ſpeaking well of others, a pleaſing benevolence and readineſs to do good to mankind, and ſpecial compaſſion to the miſerable; with an air and countenance, in a natural and unaffected manner, expreſſive of all theſe excellent qualifications.

Some of theſe, I own, are to be numbered among the duties and virtues, rather than among the ornaments of mankind; but they muſt be confeſſed to be ornaments as well as virtues. They are graces in the eye of man as well as of God. Theſe will beſpeak the affection of all that know us, and engage even an ill natured world betimes in our favour. Theſe will enable the youth of both ſexes, who are ſo happy as to attain them, to enter upon the ſtage of life with approbation and love, to paſs through the world with eaſe, as far as eaſe may be expected in ſo degenerate and unhappy a ſtate of things, to finiſh the ſcenes of action on earth with applauſe, and to leave behind them the monument of a good name, when their bodies ſleep in the duſt, and their ſouls dwell with God.

SECT. VIII.

A Guard againſt evil Influences from Perſons and Things.

IT belongs alſo to a good education, that children be guarded and ſecured, as far as poſſible, from all evil influences and unhappy impreſſions, which they may be expoſed to receive both from perſons and things. I ſhall ſufficiently explain this direction by particular inſtances.

Let not nurſes and ſervants be ſuffered to fill their minds with ſilly tales and with ſenſeleſs rhymes, many of which are ſo abſurd and ridiculous, that they will not bear to be repreſented in a grave diſcourſe. The imagination of young creatures is hereby flattered and deceived; their reaſon is groſsly abuſed and impoſed on; and by theſe means they are trained up to be amuſed with follies and nonſenſe, rather than to exerciſe their underſtanding, which is the glory of human nature.

Let not any perſons who are near them terrify their tender minds with diſmal ſtories of witches and ghoſts, of devils and evil ſpirits, of fairies and bugbears in the dark. This has had a moſt miſchievous effect on ſome children, and has fixed in their conſtitutions ſuch a rooted ſlavery and fear, that they have ſcarcely dared to be left alone all their lives, eſpecially in the night. These ſtories have made ſuch a deep and frightful impreſſion on their tender fancies, that it has enervated their ſouls, it has broken their ſpirits early, it has grown up with them, and mingled with their religion, it has laid a wretched foundation for melancholy and diſtracting ſorrows. Let theſe ſort of informations be reſerved for their firmer years, and let them not be told in their hearing, till they can judge what truth or reality there is in them, and be made ſenſible how much is owing to romance and fiction.

Nor let their little hearts be frighted at three or four years old with ſhocking and bloody hiſtories, with maſſacres and martyrdoms, with cuttings and burnings, with the images of horrible and barbarous murders, with racks and red hot pincers, with engines of torment and cruelty, with mangled limbs, and carcaſes drenched in gore. It is time enough, when their ſpirits are grown a little firmer, to acquaint them with theſe madneſſes and miſeries of human nature. There is no need that the hiſtory of the holy confeſſors and martyrs ſhould be ſet before their thoughts ſo early in all their moſt ghaſtly ſhapes and colours. Theſe things, when they are a little older, may be of excellent uſe to diſcover to them the wicked and bloody principles of perſecution, both among the Heathens and Papiſts, and to teach them the power of the grace of Chriſt, in ſupporting theſe poor ſufferers under all the torments which they ſuſtained for the love of God and the truth.

Let their ears be ever kept from all immodeſt ſtories, and from wanton ſongs; from riddles and puns with double meanings and foul intentions. Let them not be ſuffered to read wanton jeſts or amorous romances; and due care ſhould be taken to remove all books out of their way that may defile their imagination, or teach them the language or the ſentiments of impunity. Nor let their eyes be entertained with lewd and unclean pictures, and images of things and actions that are not fit to be expoſed. Theſe things indeed have too often an unhappy influence to corrupt the fancy and the manners, and in riper years have been the occaſion of numberleſs miſchiefs; but eſpecially they ſhould be kept far away from the ſight or hearing of children, leſt too deep and dangerous

impreſſions

impreſſions be made in thoſe early years of life. Nothing but what is chaſte, pure, and innocent, ſhould come within the reach of their eyes and ears. Even the common neceſſities and actions of nature ſhould be always expreſſed before them in the moſt modeſt forms of ſpeech that our mother tongue can furniſh us with. In this reſpect, as ſays the poet, children ſhould be treated with great reverence.

Maxima debetur pueris reverentia.

It is confeſſed, that books of anatomy, and other parts of neceſſary ſcience, are proper to be written; and theſe may be conſulted by perſons who are grown up to a due age, eſpecially by thoſe whoſe profeſſion requires it. There is alſo ſome neceſſity of foul narratives, where foul crimes are committed, and ought to be publicly expoſed and brought to juſtice and puniſhment. As the affairs of mankind ſtand, theſe things cannot always be avoided; but there is no manner of neceſſity that children ſhould read them, or raſh unguarded youth.

For ſome of the reaſons before mentioned, there ſhould be a wiſe conduct in ſhowing children what parts of the bible they ſhould read; for though the word of God expreſſes all things with due decency, yet there are ſome things which have been found neceſſary to be ſpoken of in ſcripture, both in the laws of MOSES, and in the repreſentation of the wickedneſs of the Gentiles in the New Teſtament, in which adult perſons have been concerned, which there is no neceſſity for children to read and hear, and they may be paſſed over or omitted amongſt them. *The Jews were wont to withhold SOLOMON's Song from their children till they were thirty years old; and the late pious and prudent Biſhop TILLOTSON, in a manuſcript which I have ſeen, wiſhes that thoſe parts of the bible, wherein there are ſome of the affairs of mankind expreſſed too naturally, as he calls it, were omitted in the public leſſons of the church. I think they may as well be excepted alſo out of the common leſſons of children, and out of the daily courſe of reading in family worſhip.

Let parents take as much care as they can, in the choice of companions and play fellows, for their ſons and daughters. It would be a happy thing if children, who are brought up in ſchools, could be ſecured from the company and evil influence of other children, who curſe and ſwear, who take the name of God in vain, and uſe filthy and unclean language. Maſters and miſtreſſes ſhould be very watchful and ſtrict in their inquiries into the behaviour of their ſcholars, of both ſexes, when they are out of their ſight, that, if it were poſſible, there might not be one among them whoſe lips are profane or impure; for one diſeaſed ſheep may infect the whole flock. However, where children find ſuch immorality practiſed by any of their fellows, they ſhould be taught to ſhow their utmoſt abhorrence of it, and ſpeedily forſake ſuch pernicious company.

SECT. IX.

A Guard ſet on the Sports and Diverſions of Children.

As parents ſhould take care to have their children employed in proper learning and buſineſs, ſo they ſhould not think it beneath them to concern themſelves a little about their ſports and recreations. Human nature, eſpecially in younger years, cannot be conſtantly kept intent on work, learning, or labour. There muſt be ſome intervals of pleaſure to give a looſe to the mind, and to refreſh the natural ſpirits. Too long and intenſe a confinement to one thing is ready to over tire the ſpirits of youth, and to weaken the ſprings of activity by exceſſive fatigue. It is an old ſimile on this occaſion, and a very juſt one, that a bow kept always bent will grow feeble and loſe its force. The alternate ſucceſſion of buſineſs and diverſion preſerves the body and ſoul of children in the happieſt temper; and learning is more cloſely purſued, and work better done after ſome agreeable relaxations. The young creatures apply themſelves to buſineſs with a new vigour after the enjoyment of ſome pleaſurable releaſe.

I confeſs it would be a conſiderable advantage, if the various parts of learning and buſineſs, in which children are employed, were ſo happily contrived, that one might be as it were a relaxation or diverſion, when the mind is tired with the other; and, if the children have a taſte and reliſh of reading and improvement of the mind, there is a rich variety of entertainment to be found in books of poetry, hiſtory, accounts of the wonders of nature and art, as well as ingenious practices in mechanical and mathematical affairs. It is happieſt indeed, where this reliſh is the gift of nature; yet children may be trained up by wiſe and alluring methods, to delight in knowledge, and to chuſe ſuch ſort of recreations, eſpecially in winter nights and rainy ſeaſons, when they cannot enjoy the more active diverſions abroad. Yet beſides theſe, ſome other ſports will generally be found neceſſary for children of almoſt all diſpoſitions.

Their ſports ought to be ſuch as are in ſome meaſure choſen by themſelves, that they may be matter of delight, ſtill under the regulation of the eye and prudence of a parent. No ſort of play ſhould be permitted, wherein ſacred things become a matter of jeſt or merriment. No ſport ſhould be indulged wherein foul language, ill names, or ſcandal are practiſed; wherein there is any violation of modeſty, or of the rules of decency and cleanlineſs; nothing muſt be ſuffered wherein there is any breach of the moral precepts of the law of God; wherein cozening or cheating, falſehood or lying, are practiſed or allowed. They ſhould be confined to honeſty, juſtice, truth, and goodneſs, even in their play.

They ſhould not be permitted to uſe ſuch ſportings as may tend to diſcompoſe their ſpirits, diſorder their nature, injure their fleſh, prejudice their health, break their limbs, or do miſchief to themſelves or each other. This ſhould rather be the play of dogs or horſes than of children.

Nor ſhould they ever be allowed to practiſe thoſe diverſions which carry an idea of barbarity or cruelty in them, though it be but to brute creatures. They ſhould not ſet up cocks to be hanged, with cudgels thrown at them about *Shrove tide*; nor delight in giving a tedious lingering death to a young litter of dogs or cats, that may be appointed to be deſtroyed or drowned, leſt they multiply too much in a houſe. Nor ſhould they take pleaſure in pricking, cutting, or mangling young birds which they have caught, nor uſing any ſavage and bloody practices towards any creatures whatever, leſt their hearts grow hard and unrelenting, and they learn in time to practiſe thoſe cruelties on their own kind, and to torture and murder their fellow mortals; or at leaſt to be indifferent to their pain and diſtreſs, ſo as to occaſion it without remorſe.

They ſhould never be ſuffered to game for money, nor even for their own toys or play things if they are coſtly and expenſive,

ſive. Many ſore inconveniences in riper years ariſe from ſuch indulgencies. Indeed no recreations ſhould be counted lawful, but thoſe in which they can with courage recommend themſelves to God, and deſire his bleſſing upon them.

Thoſe children, who are kept pretty cloſe to learning in a ſchool, ſhould be directed to purſue their recreations, as much as may be, in the open air; and to exerciſe their limbs with vigour and activity, that their growth and health may not be impaired by ſtudy, and too much confinement to a book. But in very foul weather, or in long winter evenings, as I before hinted they may be taught to ſeek ſuch diverſions as may at once refreſh and improve their minds.

For want of this, in ſome families the games of draughts and cheſs are practiſed, and ſome other little ſports on a cheſs board, without any ſtakes or aim at game, beyond the mere pleaſure of victory. In other houſes, cards and dice are introduced, for want of better recreations. The former of theſe, namely, draughts, and cheſs, are innocent enough, and may wear off a heavy hour, when the mind, or body, is unfit for buſineſs; the latter have had the general cenſure of our wiſe and pious fathers, and there have been moſt unhappy effects attending them. Indeed, theſe games are ſeldom uſed without depoſiting too much money as the ſtake; and this tends to engage the paſſions with greater vehemence than the nature of recreation can require, or ſhould admit. But I leave it to thoſe who are more ſkilful in caſuiſtic divinity, to prove them abſolutely unlawful in the very nature of the game.

However that be, I have often earneſtly wiſhed, that inſtead of all theſe games there were ſome more profitable ſports invented for a long evening, for a dull hour, or a rainy ſeaſon; and I am well aſſured, that if ſome ingenious mind, which is well ſkilled in mathematical learning and in games, would but take pains to contrive ſome ſuch diverſions, there might be a much better account given of the hours of leiſure and remiſſion of buſineſs by perſons of both ſexes, and of all ages, than can be at preſent, for want of ſuch uſeful and improving recreations.

What if cards and dice ſhould be proved to be ever ſo lawful in themſelves, yet there might be various inventions, of much more advantage to knowledge and virtue, placed in the room of them. May not ſome little tablets of paſteboard be made in imitation of cards, which might teach the unlearned ſeveral parts of grammar, philoſophy, geometry, geography, aſtronomy, &c.

What if on one ſide of theſe tablets or charts a town or city were named and deſcribed, and on the other ſide the county, province, and kingdom where that town ſtands, with ſome geographical or hiſtorical remark on it; and whoſoever in play draws the chart with the town on it, ſhould be obliged to tell the county where it ſtands, and the remark on it?

What if on one ſide were a geometrical figure, and on the other the demonſtration of ſome property belonging to it?

What if one ſide bore the name or figure of any piece of money; and the other all the multiplies of it by the nine digits, or as far as twelve? This would be uſeful for children bred up to a trade.

What if the figure of ſome plant, animal, engine, or any thing elſe in the world of nature or art, were printed on one ſide; and on the other the name of the thing, which ſhould be required to be ſpelled right by young ſcholars when they ſee the figure, in order to teach them the art of ſpelling. And if to this were added ſome beautiful expreſſion or deſcription of the thing, taken out of our beſt Engliſh poets, to be repeated by him who draws the chart which has the figure on it,

Or if one ſide were a word in Engliſh, and on the other the ſame thing expreſſed in Latin, Greek, or French, for ſuch who learn thoſe languages.

Or if ſingle names of famous men and women were on one ſide; and the reverſe contained the hiſtory, or ſome ſhort account, of thoſe perſons whoſe names are ſo famous,

What if in a ſheet of paper, or a two penny book, were written a hundred proverbs or wiſe ſayings, collected out of moraliſts, ancient and modern, relating to all the virtues and vices; and a collection of the moſt eminent examples of theſe vices and virtues were ſuperadded; and if one or more ſolid bodies of wood, of ſixteen, twenty, or thirty two flat ſides were formed with the name of one virtue or vice inſcribed on each ſide; and by the trolling of this many ſided toy, the uppermoſt word or name ſhould be an indication what proverb, or what example to require?

There have been, I confeſs, ſeveral ſorts of cards invented with proverbs, with various learned figures, and mathematical devices upon them; but, as far as I can learn, theſe have been but mere pictures and ornaments to the hearts and diamonds; theſe learned devices and figures have had no ſhare in the game; the cards are uſed like common cards ſtill, without any manner of improvement of any of the gameſters in the ſciences. But what I propoſe, is a contrivance to render theſe words or figures, or ſentiments the very implements or engines of the ſport itſelf, without ſo much as the form of any ſpade, club, heart, or diamond drawn on the chart or tablet.

Some of theſe exerciſes and diverſions, if happily contrived, may not only be fit to entertain children in their younger years, but may uſefully amuſe them when they are grown up towards manly age.

For my part, I own myſelf to be ſo much unſkilled in the various games uſed among us, that I am not fit to contrive, nor capable of inventing ſuch uſeful paſtime. But I wiſh ſome of the ſons of ingenuity had ſcience and virtue ſo much at heart, as to attempt ſuch a ſervice to mankind. And parents ſhould ſeek ſome ſort of delightful employments or recreations for the leiſure hours of their ſons and their daughters, when they are in the ſtage of youth, that they may be the more eaſily withheld from thoſe diverſions of the preſent age, which are ſo faſhionable and yet ſo dangerous.

Among theſe dangerous and modiſh diverſions, I cannot forbear to mention *midnight aſſemblies*, *playhouſes*, *gaming tables*, and *maſquerades*. Let the parents who would willingly ſee their children walking in the paths of piety and virtue, endeavour to guard their inclinations from theſe inticing amuſements. The religion and conſcience of many a well inclined youth, have been expoſed to great and immanent danger among thoſe ſcenes of vanity and folly, to ſay no worſe. My buſineſs is not to rail at them, though ſome of my readers will hardly forgive me that I deal with them ſo tenderly, and give them names of ſo ſoft a ſound. But this muſt be confeſſed, that if perſons of piety frequent them, they too much riſk their character and their innocence, and expoſe their virtue and their piety to great and needleſs temptations; or at leaſt by giving the ſanction of their preſence at ſuch places, and on ſuch occaſions, may make themſelves acceſſary to the ruin of thoſe who may be leſs fortified againſt their inſnaring tendency,

Yet ſome of theſe diverſions and amuſements are ſo charming to many a young thoughtleſs creature, that no riſk is thought too great to run, if they may but pleaſe their ears and their eyes, and gratify their idle and vain inclinations. Hence theſe houſes of pleaſure are filled and frequented; hence the theatres are crowded, and the gaming rooms attended by multitudes of youth, whoſe parents have enjoyed the bleſſing of a ſtricter education; and though ther eſtate can ſcarcely ſupport their irregular expence, yet they gratify their children in theſe hazardous recreations, and take no pains to cure them of this pernicious folly.

But the children of our age will pertly reply, 'What, we muſt live like nobody? Muſt we turn old *Puritans* again? Muſt we look like fools in company, where there is ſcarcely any diſcourſe but of plays, operas, and maſquerades, of cards, dice, and midnight aſſemblies? And pray what ſin is there in any of them?

To this I anſwer, I am very ſorry to find that the children of religious parents chuſe and delight in company where theſe things are the chief ſubject of converſation. I fear, leſt God and virtue, and the important things of another world are utterly baniſhed out of ſuch a viſiting room, where theſe diſcourſes are the chief entertainment, and there is little place found for any profitable converſation, even about the moſt uſeful and valuable affairs of this life

But, light as theſe pert queſtions are, I will conſider them one after another. You ſay firſt, 'Muſt we look like old *Puritans*? Muſt we live like nobody? No, my friends, I am not perſuading you to return to the habit and guiſe of your anceſtors, nor to tranſact your viſits, nor to model your diverſions by the pattern of foreſcore years ago. There is a certain faſhion and appearance of things that belongs to every age; modes of converſation, and forms of behaviour, are ever changing in this life; and it is no improper thing for perſons according to their rank and figure in life, to conform themſelves to the preſent cuſtoms, as far as they are innocent, and have no evil influence upon morality or religion. But where any unhappy cuſtoms prevail in the world, that make an inroad upon your piety, that endangers your virtue, that breaks the good order of religious families, and are uſually or always attended with ſome miſchievous conſequences, ſurely in theſe inſtances it is better to look like a Puritan, and ſtand almoſt alone, than to follow the multitude in the road that leads to iniquity and miſchief. A *Puritan*, or a *Seperatiſt*, from the dangerous courſes of a vicious world, is to this day a name of laſting glory; though the enemies of God and of your anceſtors, may caſt it upon them in a way of reproach. There are ſome things in which you muſt dare to be ſingular, if you would be chriſtians, and eſpecially in a corrupt and degenerate age. A ſenſe of the love of God ſecured to your hearts, and an inward peace of conſcience, will infinitely countervail the enmity of the world, and overbalance the reproaches of an ungodly generation.

Beſides, if the families that profeſs religion, and deſire to preſerve piety amongſt them, and to tranſmit it down to their children's children, would but heartily join together, in a reſolved abſtinence from theſe hazardous divertions, there would be no need of any one of you to ſtand alone, and your appearance on the ſide of virtue would not be ſingular. You might animate and ſupport one another with public courage, and, having God and virtue on your ſide, you might, in ſome meaſure, bear down the effrontery and ridicule of an age of vice and ſenſuality; an age wherein comedies and maſquerades, gaming tables and midnight aſſemblies, are become the modiſh diverſions.

But ſtill it may be ſaid, What ſin is there in any of them? Bear with me then while I take them in order one after another, and briefly give my opinion concerning each of them.

1. Let us begin with the *Playhouſe*. It is granted, that a dramatic repreſentation of the affairs of human life is by no means ſinful in itſelf: I am inclined to think, that valuable compoſitions might be made of this kind, ſuch as might entertain a virtuous audience with innocent delight, and even with ſome real profit. Such have been written in French, and have in times paſt, been acted with applauſe. But it is too well known, that the commedies which appear on our ſtage, and moſt of the tragedies too, have no deſign to ſet religion or virtue in its beſt light, nor to render vice odious to the ſpectators. In many of them, piety makes a ridiculous figure, and virtue is dreſt in the habit of folly; the ſacred name of God is frequently taken in vain, if not blaſphemed; and the man of flagrant vice is the fine gentleman, and the poets favourite, who muſt be rewarded at the end of the play.

Beſides, there is nothing will paſs on our theatres that has not the mixture of ſome amourous intrigue; lewdneſs itſelf reigns, and riots in ſome of their ſcenes ; ſobriety is put quite out of countenance, and modeſty is in certain danger there ; the youth of ſerious religion, that ventures ſometimes into the infected air, finds his antidotes too weak to reſiſt the contagion. The pleaſures of the cloſet and devout retirement are ſuſpended firſt, and then utterly vanquiſhed by the overpowering influence of the laſt comedy ; the fancy is all over defiled, the vain images riſe uppermoſt in the ſoul, and pollute the feeble attempts of devotion, till by degrees ſecret religion is loſt and forgotten ; and in a little time the playhouſe has got ſo much the maſtery of conſcience, that the young chriſtian goes to bed after the evening drama, with as much ſatisfaction and eaſe, as he uſed to do after evening prayer.

If there have been found two or three plays which have been tolerably free from lewd and profane mixtures, there are ſome ſcores or hundreds that have many hateful paſſages in them, for which no excuſe can be made. And when all the charming powers of poeſy and muſic are joined with the gayeſt ſcenes and entertainments, to aſſault the ſenſes and the ſoul at once, and to drive out virtue from the poſſeſſion of the heart, it is to be feared that it will not long keep its place and power there. What a prophet of their own ſays of the court, may with much more truth and juſtice be ſaid of the theatre.

It is a golden, but a fatal circle,
Upon whoſe magic ſkirts a thouſand devils
In cryſtal forms ſit, tempting innocence,
And beckon early virtue from its centre.

Another of the poets of the town, who made no great pretences to virtue, and who well knew the qualities of the theatre, and its miſchievous influence, writes thus of it :

It would be endleſs to trace all the vice
That from the playhouſe takes immediate riſe.
It is the unexhauſted magazine
That ſtocks the land with vanity and ſin.
——————*By flouriſhing ſo long,*
Numbers have been undone both old and young,
And many hundred ſouls are now unbleſt,
Which elſe had dy'd in peace, and found eternal reſt.

As for any of my friends who are not yet convinced of the juſtice of theſe cenſures, I entreat them to read what Mr. COLLIER, Mr. BEDFORD, and Mr. LAWE have written on this ſubject. And though I would by no means juſtify and ſupport every remark they have made, yet I think every reader who has a modeſt and pious ſoul, and has the cauſe of God and virtue near his heart, will be a little afraid to give his preſence there, leaſt he ſhould ſeem to encourage ſuch incentives to iniquity and profaneneſs; or if he ſhould go thither once, merely to ſee and know what it is, I will perſuade myſelf he will not make it his practice, or frequent that houſe of infection.

But you will ſay, 'There is ſome advantage to be gained by theſe entertainments; there is a deal of fine language in them, and faſhionable airs of converſation; there are many of the fooleries of life expoſed in the theatre, which ſuit not a more ſolemn place; and comedies will teach us to know the world, and avoid the ridicule of the age.'

But let my younger friends, who are ſo willing to improve in their knowledge of the world and politeneſs, remember, that whatſoever may be gotten, there is much more to be loſt among thoſe perilous and enticing ſcenes of vanity; the riſk of their virtue and ſerious religion, can never be recompenſed by the learning a few ſpeeches and modiſh airs, or the correction of ſome awkward and unfaſhionable piece of behaviour. This is to plunge headlong into the ſea, that I may waſh off the little dirt from my coat, or to venture on poiſon in order to cure a pimple.

Beſides, moſt or all of theſe ends might be attained by reading ſome few of the beſt of them in private; though I confeſs I am cautious how I recommend this practice, becauſe I think that almoſt all theſe dramatic compoſures in our age, have ſome dangerous mixtures in them. Thoſe volumes of ſhort eſſays which are entitled the *Spectator*, will give a ſufficient knowledge of the ways of the world, and cure us of a hundred little follies, without the danger that there is in reading the plays; though even in thoſe very volumes, I heartily wiſh that here and there a leaf were left out, wherein the writers ſpeak too favourably of the ſtage, and now and then, though rarely, introduce a ſentence that would raiſe a bluſh in the face of ſtrict virtue.

2. The next forbidden divertion is the *maſquerade.* By all the deſcriptions that I have heard of it, it ſeems to be a very low piece of foolery, fitting for children and for perſons of a little and trifling genius, who can entertain themſelves at blind man's buff. And as the entertainment is made meaner than that of the theatre, ſo it is ſomething more hazardous to virtue and innocence. It does not ſo much as pretend to any ſuch improvement of the mind as the theatre profeſſes; while it lays a more dreadful ſnare to modeſty, and has made too often a diſmal inroad on the morals of thoſe who frequent it. Could I but perſuade perſons to read what the Right Reverend he late Lord Biſhop of *London* has publiſhed, in his ſermon for the Reformation of Manners, I am ready to think, that all thoſe who profeſs virtue, would refrain their feet far from it, and not come near the doors of the houſe. His words are theſe:

'Amongſt the various engines contrived by a corrupt generation to ſupport vice and profaneneſs, and keep them in countenance, I muſt particularly take notice of maſquerades, as they deprive virtue and religion of their laſt refuge, I mean *ſhame,* which keeps multitudes of ſinners within the bounds of decency, after they have broken through all the ties of principle and conſcience. But this invention ſets them free from that tie alſo, being neither better nor worſe, than an opportunity to ſay and do there, what virtue, decency, and good humour will not permit to be ſaid or done in any other place. If perſons of either ſex will frequent lewd and profane plays, openly join themſelves to looſe and Atheiſtical aſſemblies of any kind, they have their reward, they are ſure to be marked and branded by all good men, as perſons of corrupt minds and vicious inclinations, who have abandoned religion and all pretences to it, and given themſelves over to luxury and profaneneſs. As bad as the world is, this is a heavy load upon the characters of men, and in ſpite of all the endeavours of vice to bear up and keep itſelf in countenance, it ſinks them by degrees into infamy and contempt. But this pernicious invention intrenches vice and profaneneſs againſt all the aſſaults and impreſſions of ſhame. Whatever lewdneſs may be concerted; whatever luxury, immodeſty, or extravagance may be committed in word or deed, no one's reputation is at ſtake, no one's character is reſponſible for it. A circumſtance of ſuch terrible conſequence to virtue and good manners, that if maſquerades ſhall ever be revived, as we heartily hope they will not, all ſerious chriſtians within theſe two great and populous cities will be nearly concerned to lay it to heart, and diligently beſtir themſelves in cautioning their friends and neighbours againſt ſuch fatal ſnares. Particularly all who have the government and education of youth, ought to take the greateſt care to keep them out of the way of this dangerous temptation, and then to labour againſt the ſpreading of it.

I cannot forbear to add, that, all religious conſiderations apart, this is a diverſion that no true Engliſhman ought to be fond of, when he remembers that it was brought in among us by the ambaſſadour of a neighbouring nation in the laſt reign, while his maſter was in meaſures to enſlave us. Indeed, there is not a more effectual way to enſlave a people, than firſt to diſpirit and enfeeble them by licencioufneſs and effeminacy.' Thus far the right reverend author, whoſe zeal for the ſuppreſſion of all theſe tempting machineries, has been ſo conſpicuous and honourable.

3. The third place of dangerous reſort is the *gaming table.* Many young gentlemen have been there bubbled and cheated of large ſums of money, which were given them by their parents to ſupport them honourably in their ſtations. In ſuch ſort of ſhops, young ladies are tempted to ſquander away too large a ſhare of their yearly allowance, if not of the proviſion which their parents have made for their whole lives. It is a fatal ſnare to both ſexes. If they win, they are allured ſtill onward, while, according to their language, luck runs on their ſide. If they loſe, they are tempted to another and another caſt of the die, and enticed on ſtill to freſh games by a deluſive hope, that fortune will turn, and they ſhall recover all they have loſt. In the midſt of theſe ſcenes their paſſions riſe ſhamefully, a greedy deſire of gain makes them warm and eager, and new loſſes plunge them ſometimes into vexation and fury, till the ſoul is quite beaten off from its guard, and virtue and reaſon have no manner of command over them.

My worthy friend Mr. NEAL, in his reformation ſermon, has taken occaſion not only to inform us, that merchants and tradeſmen mix themſelves at theſe tables with men of deſperate fortunes, and throw the dice for their eſtates; but in a very decent and ſoft manner of addreſs has inquired, 'Whether puplic gaming in virtuous ladies is not a little out of character? Whether it does not draw them into mixed company, and give them an air of boldneſs, which is perfectly in-

conſiſtent

conſiſtent with that modeſty, which is the ornament of their ſex? Whether it does not engage them in a habit of idleneſs, and of keeping ill hours? Whether their paſſions are not ſometimes diſordered? And whether the loſſes they ſuſtain have not a tendency to breed ill blood in their families, and between their deareſt relations? It has been often obſerved, that gaming in a lady has uſually been attended with the loſs of reputation, and ſometimes of that which is ſtill more valuable, her virtue and honour.' Thus far proceeds this uſeful ſermon.

Now if theſe be the diſmal and frequent conſequences of the gambling table, the loſs of a little money is one of the leaſt injuries ſuſtained by it. But what if you ſhould ſtill come off gainers? Is this the way that God has taught or allowed us to procure the neceſſary comforts of life? Is this a ſort of labour or traffic on which you can aſk the bleſſing of heaven? Can you lift up your face to God, and pray, that he would ſucceed the caſt of the die, the drawing of the lot, or the dealing out of the cards, ſo as to increaſe your gain, while it is the very ſenſe and language of the prayer, that your neighbour may ſuſtain ſo much loſs? This is a ſad and guilty circumſtance which belongs to gaming, that one can gain nothing but what another loſes; and, conſequently, we cannot aſk a bleſſing on ourſelves, but at the ſame time we pray for a blaſt on our neighbour.

Will you hope to excuſe it by ſaying, that your neighbour conſents to this blaſt, or this loſs, by entering into the game, and there is no injury where there is conſent?

I anſwer, that though he conſents to loſe conditionally, and on the venturous hope of gain, yet he is not willing to ſuſtain the loſs abſolutely; but when either chance, or his neighbour's ſkill in the game has determined againſt him, then he is conſtrained to loſe, and does it unwillingly; ſo that he ſtill ſuſtains it as a loſs, misfortune, or evil. Now if you aſk the bleſſing of heaven on this way of your getting money, you aſk rather that your neighbour may abſolutely ſuſtain a loſs, without any regard to the condition of his hope of gain. Your wiſh and prayer is directly that you may get, and that he may loſe. You cannot wiſh this good to yourſelf, but you wiſh the contrary evil of him; and therefore I think gaming for gain cannot be conſiſtent with the laws of Chriſt, which certainly forbid us to wiſh evil to our neighbour.

And if you cannot ſo much as in thought aſk God's bleſſing on this, as you certainly may on ſuch recreations, as have an evident tendency innocently to exerciſe the body, and relax the mind, it ſeems your conſcience ſecretly condemns it, and there is an additional proof of its being evil to you.

All the juſteſt writers of morality, and the beſt caſuiſts, have generally, if not univerſally, determined againſt theſe methods of gain. Whatever game may be indulged as lawful, it is ſtill as a recreation, and not as a calling or buſineſs of life; and therefore no larger ſums ought to be riſked or ventured in this manner, than what may be lawfully laid out by any perſons for their preſent recreation, according to their different circumſtances in the world.

Beſides all this, think of the loſs of time, and the waſte of life that is continually made by ſome, who frequent theſe gaming places. Think how it calls away many a youth from their proper buſineſs, and tempts them to throw away what is not their own, and to riſk the ſubſtance, as well as the diſpleaſure, of their parents, or of their maſter, at all the uncertain hazards of a dice box. Read the pages which Mr. NEAL has employed on this theme, in the ſermon juſt now cited. Read what Mr. DORRINGTON has written ſeveral years ago on this ſubject of gaming. I wiſh ſuch diſcourſes were freſh in print, and put into the hands of every one who lies under this temptation.

4. The *midnight aſſemblies* are the laſt which I ſhall mention of thoſe modiſh and hazardous diverſions, wherein youth are drawn away to much vanity, and plunged into the ſenſual gaieties of life; and that at thoſe hours, part of which ſhould be devoted to the religion of the family, or the cloſet, and part to the nightly repoſe of nature. It is acknowledged to be proper and needful, that young people ſhould be indulged in ſome recreations, agreeable to their age, and ſuitable to the condition in which Providence has placed them. But I would aſk whether the great and only valuable end of recreation is to be expected from theſe midnight aſſemblies, namely, to relieve us from the fatigues of life, and to exhilarate the ſpirits, ſo as thereby to fit us for the duties of life and religion? Now, are theſe the proper means to fit us for the duties of either kind? Perhaps it will be ſaid, that dancing, which is practiſed in thoſe aſſemblies, is an exerciſe conducive to health, and therefore a mean of fitting us for the duties of life. But may not the unſeaſonableneſs of the midnight hour prevent and over balance the benefit, that might otherwiſe be ſuppoſed to ariſe from the exerciſe? Is it likely that health

ſhould be promoted or preſerved, by changing the ſeaſons and order of nature, and by allotting thoſe hours to exerciſe, which God and nature have ordained to reſt? Is the returning home after five or ſix hours dancing, through the cold and dampneſs of the midnight air, a proper mean of preſerving health? Have not theſe fatal effects been too often felt? Have there not been ſacrifices of human lives offered to this idol? Have there been no fair young martyrs to this unſeaſonable folly? Are there not ſome of its ſlaves, who are become feeble, labouring under ſore diſeaſes, and ſome of them fallen aſleep in death? Have not their muſic and their dancing, in ſtead of natural reſt in their beds, brought them down to a long ſilence in the grave, and to an untimely reſt in the duſt? Thoſe amiable pieces of human nature, who were lately the joy and hope of their too indulgent parents, are now the bitterneſs of their hearts; and thoſe very exerciſes from whence they hoped the continuance of their joy, as the ſuppoſed means of confirming their children's health, are become an everlaſting ſpring of their mourning.

As thoſe midnight recreations are badly ſuited to fit us for the duties of the civil life, ſo they are worſe ſuited to fit us for, or rather, they are more apparently oppoſite to, the duties of religion. The religion of the cloſet is neglected, the beautiful regularity and order of the family is broken; and when the night has been turned into day, a good part of the next day is turned into night, while the duties of the morning, both to God and man, are unperformed. Thoſe who have frequented theſe aſſemblies know all this, and are my witneſſes to the truth of it. Nay, the very practice itſelf, at thoſe unſeaſonable hours, tells all the world how much they prefer theſe dangerous amuſements to the worſhip of God in the evening, and in the morning, and to all the conveniences and decorum of family government. Beſides if I ſpeak to chriſtians, have you not found that the indulgence to this ſort of diverſions, which are uſually practiſed in thoſe unſeaſonable aſſemblies, leads the mind away inſenſibly from God and religion, gives a vanity of ſpirit, and greatly abates the ſpiritual and heavenly temper which ſhould belong to chriſtians, ? Has it not taken away the ſavour of godlineſs and tincture of piety from ſome younger minds? And do elder chriſtians never ſuffer by it? Let it be further conſidered, what ſort of company you mingle with in thoſe midnight aſſemblies. Are they moſt frequented by the wiſe and pious, or by the more vain and vicious part of mankind? Do they tend to fill your mind with the moſt improving notions and your ears and lips with the moſt proper converſation? Do you that frequent them never find your piety in danger there? Does ſtrict religion and prayer reliſh ſo well with you after thoſe gaudy nights of mirth and folly? And do you then, when you join in thoſe aſſemblies, practiſe the commands of God, to 'abſtain from all appearance of evil, and to ſhun the paths of temptation?' Can you pray for a bleſſing on your attendance on theſe midnight meetings? Or can you hope to run into the midſt of thoſe ſparks and living coals, and yet not be burned, nor ſo much as have your garments ſinged? Are not parents very generally ſenſible, that there are dangerous ſnares to youth in thoſe gay diverſions? And therefore the mother herſelf will go along with her young offspring to take care of them, and to watch over them; and perhaps there is ſcarcely any place or time which more wants the watchful eye of a ſuperiour. But here let me aſk, Is this all the reaſon why the mother attends thoſe ſcenes of vanity? Has ſhe no reliſh for them herſelf? Has ſhe no gay humours of her own to be gratified, which ſhe diſguiſes and covers with the pretence of a parental ſolicitude for the virtue and honour of her offspring? Are there no mothers who freely lead their children into thoſe perilous places, where ſoul and body are in danger, and are really their tempters, under a colour of being their gardians.

You will plead perhaps that ſome of theſe things are proper for the improvement of young people in good breeding and politeneſs. They muſt be brought into company, to ſee the world, and to learn how to behave with becoming decency. Well, ſuppoſe theſe aſſemblies to be academies of politeneſs, and that young people attend there upon lectures of good breeding. Is there no other time ſo fit as midnight, to poliſh the youth of both ſexes, and to breed them well? May not an hour or too be appointed, at more proper ſeaſons, by ſelect companies, for mutual converſation and innocent delight? Can there be no genteel recreations enjoyed, no leſſons of behaviour taught by day light? Can no method of improvement in good breeding be contrived and appointed, which ſhall be more ſecure from temptations and inconveniences? Are there none which are more harmleſs, more innocent, of better reputation among perſons of ſtrict piety, and which make leſs inroads on the duties of life, both ſolitary and ſocial, civil and religious?

Shall I enquire once more, what is done at many of thoſe midnight aſſemblies, before the dance is begun, or when it is ended, and what is the entertainment of thoſe who are not engaged in dancing? Are they not active in gaming? Are not cards the buſineſs of the hour? Are not children educated, by theſe means, in the love of gaming? And do they not hereby get ſuch a reliſh of it, as proves afterwards pernicious to them? Now if gaming be not a practice fit to be encouraged, what encouragement do thoſe aſſemblies deſerve, where gaming is one of the chief diverſions or buſineſs?

But it is time to put an end to this ſort of diſcourſe. I beg pardon of my readers for having drawn it out to ſo great a length; for I have ſaid too much on this ſubject, for thoſe who have no inclination to theſe criminal and dangerous diverſions; and I wiſh I may have ſaid enough to do good to thoſe who have.

Upon the whole, I conclude, it is the duty of parents who would give their children a good education, to ſee to it, that children, in their younger years, do not indulge ſuch recreations as may ſpoil all the good effects of the pious inſtructions, the prayers, and care of their parents. Otherwiſe, if you encourage them in ſuch recreations, you are building up thoſe vanities of mind, and thoſe vicious inclinations with one hand, which you labour to prevent or to deſtroy with the other.

SECT. X.

Of the proper Degrees of Liberty and Reſtraint in the Education of a Son, illuſtrated by Example.

SO weak and unhappy is human nature, that it is ever ready to run into extremes; and when we would recover ourſelves from an exceſs on the right hand, we know not where to ſtop till we are got to an exceſs on the left. Inſtances of this kind are innumerable in all the affairs of human life; but it is hardly more remarkable in any thing, than in the ſtrict and ſevere education of our fathers a century ago, and in the moſt profuſe and unlimited liberty that is indulged to children in our age.

In thoſe days, the ſons were bred up to learning by terrible diſcipline; every Greek and Latin author they converſed with was attended with one or many new ſcourges, to drive them into acquaintance with him; and not the leaſt miſdemeanor in life could eſcape the laſh; as though the father would prove his daily love to his ſon by never ſparing his rod, Prov. xiii. 24. Now a days young maſter muſt be treated with a fooliſh fondneſs, till he is grown to the ſize of man; and let his faults be ever ſo heinous, and his obſtinacy ever ſo great, yet the preceptor muſt not let him hear the name of the rod, leſt the child ſhould be frighted or hurt; the advice of the wiſeſt of men is utterly forgotten, when he tells us, that due correction ſhall drive out the folly that is bound up in the heart of a child, Prov. xxii. 15. Or elſe they boldly reverſe his divine counſel, Prov. xiii. 24. as though they would make the rule of their practice a direct contradiction to the words of SOLOMON, namely, He that ſpareth the rod loveth his ſon, but he that hateth him chaſtens him betimes.

In that day, many children were kept in a moſt ſervile ſubjection, and not ſuffered to ſit down, or to ſpeak, in the preſence of their father, till they were come to the age of one and twenty. The leaſt degree of freedom was eſteemed a a bold preſumption, and incurred a ſharp reproof. Now they are made familiar companions to their parents, almoſt from the very nurſery; and therefore they will hardly bear a check or rebuke at their hand.

In the beginning of the laſt century, and ſo onward to the middle of it, the children were uſually obliged to believe what their parents and their maſters taught them, whether they were principles of ſcience, or articles of faith and practice; they were tied down almoſt to every punctilio, as though it were neceſſary to ſalvation; they were not ſuffered to examine or inquire whether their teachers were in the right, and ſcarcely knew upon what grounds they were to aſſent to the things that were taught them; for it was a maxim of all teachers, that the learner muſt believe; *Diſcentem operte credere.* Then an *ipſe dixit*, or ARISTOTLE ſaid ſo, was a ſufficient proof of any propoſition in the colleges; and for a man of five and twenty to be a chriſtian and a proteſtant, a diſſenter or a churchman, it was almoſt reaſon enough to ſay that his father was ſo. But in this century, when the doctrine of a juſt and reaſonable liberty is better known, too many of the preſent youth break all the bonds of nature and duty, and run to the wildeſt degrees of looſeneſs, both in belief and practice. They ſlight the religion which their parents have taught them, that they may appear to have choſen a religion for themſelves; and when they have made a creed or belief of their own, or rather borrowed ſome ſcraps of infidelity from their vain companions and equals, they find pretences enough to caſt off all other creeds at once, as well as the counſels and cuſtoms of their religious predeceſſors.

'The practices of our fathers, ſay they, were preciſe and fooliſh, and ſhall be no rule for our conduct; the articles of their faith were abſurd and myſterious, but we will believe nothing of myſtery, leſt our faith ſhould be as ridiculous as theirs.' In their younger years, and before their reaſon is half grown, they pretend to examine the ſublimeſt doctrines of chriſtianity; and a raw and half witted boy ſhall commence an infidel, becauſe he cannot comprehend ſome of the glorious truths of the goſpel; and laughs at his elders and his anceſtors, for believing what they could not comprehend.

The child now a days forgets that his parent is obliged, by all the laws of God and nature, to train him up in his own religion, till he is come to the proper age of diſcretion to judge for himſelf; he forgets, or he will not know, that the parent is intruſted with the care of the ſouls of his young offspring by the very laws of nature, as well as by the revealed covenants of innocency and of grace. The ſon now a days forgets the obligations he is under to honour and obey the perſons that gave him birth; he pays no regard to the doctrines which led on his anceſtors to the love of God and man; whereas doctrines that have ſuch influence, claim at leaſt ſome degrees of attention, and eſpecially from a ſon who has been trained up in them, and beheld the effect of them in the piety of his parents; nor will the very light of nature ſuffer him to depart from them, but upon the cleareſt judgment of his own mature reaſon, a thorough and impartial ſearch into the ſubject, the loud inward dictates of his conſcience, and the full evidence of his parents miſtake.

So wanton and licentious a ſpirit has poſſeſſed ſome of the youth of the nation, that they never think they have freed themſelves from the prejudices of their education, till they have thrown off almoſt all the yokes of reſtraint that were laid upon them by God or man. Some take a petulent pride in laying aſide the holy ſcriptures, for the ſame reaſon that TIMOTHY was adviſed to continue in them; and that is, becauſe 'they have learned and known them from their very childhood,' 2 Tim. iii. 15. And ſome, perhaps, have been laughed out of their chriſtianity, leſt it ſhould be ſaid, their mothers and their nurſes had made them chriſtians.

Heretofore the ſons were ſcarcely ſuffered to be abſent from home an hour, without expreſs leave, till they were arrived at the age of man, nor daughters till they were married; now both ſexes take an unbounded licence of roving where they pleaſe, and from a dozen years old, they forget to aſk leave to wander or to viſit where their fancies lead them; at firſt the parent gives a looſe and winks at it, and then the child claims it as his due forever.

In ſhort, the laſt age taught mankind to believe they were mere children, and treated them as ſuch, till they were near thirty years old; but the preſent gives them leave to fancy themſelves complete men and women at twelve or fifteen, and they accordingly judge and manage for themſelves entirely, and too often diſpiſe all advice of their elders.

Now, though it be ſufficiently evident that both theſe are extremes of liberty or reſtraint, yet if we judge by the reaſon of things, or by experience and ſucceſs, ſurely the ancient education is to be preferred before the preſent, and of the two ſhould rather be choſen.

If we would determine this by reaſon, it is eaſy to ſee that a father of fifty or ſixty years old, is fitter to judge for his ſon at four and twenty, in many matters of importance, than a boy of fifteen is to judge for himſelf.

Or, if we would decide the matter by experience, it is plain enough that the poſterity of the former generation, who are the fathers and the grandfathers of the preſent, had more of ſerious religion and true virtue amonſt them, than there is any hope or proſpect of among the greateſt part of their children and grand children. And if I would uſe a bold metaphor, I might venture to ſay with truth, the laſt century has brought forth more ſolid fruits of goodneſs, than the preſent can yet ſhow in bloſſoms; and in my opinion, this is much owing to the neglect of the pruning knife.

But after all, is there no medium between theſe two extremes, exceſs of confinement, and exceſs of liberty? May not young underſtandings be allowed to ſhoot and ſpread themſelves a little, without growing rank and rampant? May not children be kept in a due and gentle ſubjection to their parents, without putting yokes of bondage on them? Is there no reaſonable reſtraint of the wild opinions and violent inclinations of youth, without making chains for the underſtanding, and throwing fetters on the ſoul? May not the young gentleman begin to act like a man, without forgetting that he is a ſon? and maintain the full liberty of his own judgment, without inſolence and contempt of the opinions of his elders? May not he who is bred up a proteſtant and a chriſtian, judge freely for himſelf, without the prejudice of his education, and yet continue a chriſtian and a proteſtant ſtill? Is it not poſſible for the parent to indulge, and the child to enjoy, a juſt liberty, and yet neither encourage nor practiſe a wild licentiouſneſs?

Yes, ſurely; and there have been happy inſtances in the laſt age, and there are ſome in this, both of parents and children, that have to tread this middle path, and found wiſdom and virtue in it, piety and peace. AGATHUS has bred his ſon up under ſuch diſcipline, as renders them both proper examples to the world.

EUGENIO is juſt out of his minority, and, in the twenty ſecond year of his age, he practiſes the man with all that decency, which makes his father's acquaintance covet his company. Indeed, they may learn by his diſcourſe the art of good reaſoning, as well as the precepts of piety from his example. He is an entertaining companion to the gay young gentlemen his equals; and yet divines and philoſophers take a pleaſure to have EUGENIO amongſt them. He is careſſed by his ſuperiours in honour and years; and though he is releaſed from the diſcipline of parental education, yet he treats the lady his mother with all that affectionate duty, that could be deſired or demanded of him ten years ago. His father is content to ſee his own youth outſhined by his ſon, and confeſſes that EUGENIO already promiſes greater things than AGATHUS did at thirty.

If you aſk whence theſe happy qualities ariſe, I grant there was ſome foundation for them in the very make of his nature; there was ſomething of a complexional virtue mingled with his frame; but it is much more owing to the wiſe conduct of his parents from his very infancy, and the bleſſing of divine grace attending their labours, their prayers, and their hopes.

He was trained up from the very cradle to all the duties of infant virtue, by the allurements of love and remark, ſuited to his age; and never was driven to practiſe any thing by a frown or a haſty word, where it was poſſible for kinder affections to work the ſame effect by indulgence and delay.

As faſt as his reaſoning powers began to appear and exert themſelves, they were conducted in an eaſy track of thought, to find out and obſerve the reaſonableneſs of every part of his duty, and the lovely character of a child obedient to reaſon and to his parents; while every departure from duty was ſhown to be ſo contrary to reaſon, as laid an early foundation for conſcience to work upon; conſcience began here to aſſume its office, and to manifeſt its authority in dictates, reproofs, and reflections of mind, peaceful or painful, according to his behaviour. When his parents obſerved this inward monitor to awake in his ſoul, they could better truſt him out of their ſight.

When he became capable of conceiving of an almighty and inviſible Being, who made this world and every creature in it, he was taught to pay all due regard to this God his Maker; and, from the authority and love of his father on earth, he was led to form right ideas, as far as childhood permitted, of the power, government, and goodneſs of the univerſal and ſupreme Father of all in heaven.

He was informed why puniſhment was due to an offence againſt God or his parents, that his fear might become a uſeful paſſion to awaken and guard his virtue; but he was inſtructed, at the ſame time, that where he heartily repented of a fault, and returned to his duty with new diligence, there was forgiveneſs to be obtained both of God and man.

When at any time a friend interceded for him to his father, after he had been guilty of a fault, he was hereby directed into the doctrine of Jeſus the Mediator between God and man; and thus he knew him as an interceſſor, before he could well underſtand the notion of his ſacrifice and atonement.

In his younger years he paſſed but twice under the correction of the rod; once for a fit of obſtinacy and perſiſting in a falſehood; then he was given up to ſevere chaſtiſement, and it diſpelled and cured the ſullen humour forever; and once for the contempt of his mother's authority he endured the ſcourge again, and he wanted it more.

He was enticed ſometimes to the love of letters, by making his leſſon a reward of ſome domeſtic duty; and a permiſſion to purſue ſome parts of learning was the appointed recompence of his diligence and improvement in others.

There was nothing required of his memory but what was firſt as far as poſſible let into his underſtanding; and by proper images and repreſentations, ſuited to his years, he was taught to form ſome conception of the things deſcribed, before he was bid to learn the words by heart. Thus he was freed from the danger of treaſuring up the cant and jargon of mere names, inſtead of the riches of ſolid knowledge.

When any abſtruſe and difficult notions occurred in his courſe of learning, his preceptor poſtponed them till he had gone through that ſubject in a more ſuperficial way. For this purpoſe he paſſed twice through all the ſciences; and to make the doctrines of chriſtianity eaſy to him in his childhood, he had two or three catechiſms compoſed by his tutor, each of them ſuited to his more early or more improved capacity, till at twelve years old he was thought fit to learn that public form, which is more univerſally taught and approved.

As he was inured to reaſoning from his childhood, ſo he was inſtructed to prove every thing, according to the nature of the ſubject, by natural or moral arguments, as far as his years would admit; thus he drew much of his early knowledge from reaſon, or from revelation, by the force of his judgment, and not merely from his teachers by the ſtrength of his memory.

His parents were perſuaded indeed that they ought to teach him the principles of virtue while he was a child; and the moſt important truths of religion, both natural and revealed, before he was capable of deriving them from the fund of his own reaſon; or of framing a religion for himſelf out of ſo large a book as the bible. They thought themſelves under the obligation of that divine command, 'Train up a child in the way he ſhould go, and when he is old he will not depart from it,' Prov. xxii. 6. Therefore from a child they made him acquainted with the holy ſcriptures, and perſuaded him to believe that they were given by the inſpiration of God, before it was poſſible for him to take in the arguments from reaſon, hiſtory, tradition, &c. which muſt be joined together to confirm the ſacred canon, and to prove the ſeveral books of the bible to be divine. Thus, like TIMOTHY, he 'continued in the things which he had learned, and had been aſſured of, knowing of whom he had learned them,' 2 Tim. iii. 14, 15, 16. Yet, as his years advanced, they thought it requiſite to ſhow him the ſolid and rational foundaions of his faith, that his hope might be built on the authority of God, and not of men.

Thus the apoſtles and prophets were made his early companions; and being inſtructed in the proofs of the chriſtian religion, and the divine original of his bible, he pays a more conſtant and ſacred regard to it, ſince his judgment and reaſon aſſure him that it is the word of God, than when he was a child, and believed it becauſe his mother told him ſo. He reads the ſcriptures daily now, not like the leſſons of his infancy, but as the infalible rule of his faith and practice. He ſearches them every day in his cloſet, not to confirm any articles and doctrines that he reſolved to believe, but, as the noble Bereans did, to examine and try whether thoſe doctrines and articles ought to be believed, which he was taught in the nurſery.

After he arrived at fifteen, he was ſuffered to admit nothing into his full aſſent, till his mind ſaw the rational evidence of the propoſition, or at leaſt till he felt the power of thoſe reaſons, which obliged him to aſſent on moral evidence and teſtimony, where the evidences of ſenſe or of reaſon were not to be expected. He knew that he was not to hope for mathematical proofs, that there is a Pope at *Rome*, that the Turks have dominion over *Judea*, that St. PAUL wrote an epiſtle to the Romans, that Chriſt was crucified without the gates of *Jeruſalem*, and that in three days he roſe from the dead; and yet that there is juſt and reaſonable evidence to enforce and ſupport the belief of all theſe. Truths too ſublime for preſent comprehenſion, he would not admit as a part of his faith, till he ſaw full evidence of a ſpeaking God and a divine revelation.

His tutor never impoſed any thing on him with a magiſterial air, but by way of advice recommended to him ſuch ſtudies and ſuch methods of improvement, as his experience had long approved; he gave frequent hints of the danger of ſome opinions, and the fatal conſequences of ſome modiſh and miſtaken principles. He let him know generally what ſentiments he himſelf embraced among the divided opinions of the age; and what clear and comprehenſive knowledge, what ſatisfaction of judgment, ſerenity of mind, and peace of conſcience, were to be found in the principles which he had choſen; but he exhorted his pupil ſtill to chuſe wiſely for himſelf, and led him onward in the ſciences, and in common and ſacred affairs, to frame his own ſentiments by juſt rules of reaſoning; though EUGENIO did not ſuperſtitiouſly confine his belief to the opinions of his inſtructor, yet he could not but love the man that indulged him in ſuch a liberty of thought, and gave him ſuch an admirable clue, by which he let himſelf into the ſecrets of knowledge, human and divine; thus under the happy and inſenſible influences of ſo prudent a ſupervisor, he traced the paths of learning, and enjoyed the unpeakable pleaſure of being his own teacher, and of framing his opinions himſelf. By theſe means he began early to uſe his reaſon with freedom, and to judge for himſelf, without a ſervile ſubmiſſion to the authority of others; and yet to pay a juſt and ſolemn deference to perſons of age and experience, and particularly to thoſe who were the proper and appointed guides of his youth, and who led him on ſo gently in the paths of knowledge.

He loves to call himſelf by the honourable name of a chriſtian; and though his particular ſentiments approach much nearer to the opinions of ſome parties than to others, yet he likes not to be called by the name of any party, for he is wiſe and bold enough to be a bigot to none. He practices a noble and an extenſive charity to thoſe that, in leſſer matters, differ widely from him, if they do but maintain the moſt eſſential and neceſſary parts of chriſtianity; nor does he ſeclude them from his communion, nor withhold himſelf from theirs; but as the providence of God gives him juſt occaſions, he eats and drinks with them at the table of their common Lord, provided always that they impoſe nothing upon his practice contrary to his conſcience.

Yet his charity has its limits too; for he hardly knows how to worſhip the Son of God in the moſt ſolemn ordinance of communion, with thoſe that eſteem him but a mere man; nor can he join with an aſſembly of profeſſed *Socinians* to commemorate the death of CHRIST, who deny it to be a proper atonement for the ſins of men.

He dares believe the doctrines of original ſin, the ſatisfaction of CHRIST, the influences of the bleſſed ſpirit, and other deſpiſed truths of the goſpel; and this not becauſe his anceſtors believed them, but becauſe he cannot avoid the evidence of them in the ſcripture. And if in ſome few points of leſs importance he takes leave to differ from the ſentiments of his elders, it is with ſuch a becoming modeſty, that convinces his father how unwilling he is to diſſent from him; and yet he maintains his opinion with ſuch an appearance of argument, and ſuch an honeſt concern for truth and piety, that makes it plain to his friends, that he is under the ſtrong conſtraint of an inward conviction. Thus, though he has perhaps ſome new apprehenſions of things, yet he is by no means led into them by a licentious humour of oppoſing his teachers, nor a wanton pride of free thinking.

He was not kept a ſtranger to the errours and follies of mankind, nor was he let looſe amongſt them, either in books or in company, without a guard and a guide. His preceptor let him know the groſs miſtakes and iniquities of men, ancient and modern, but inlaid him with proper principles of truth and virtue, and furniſhed him with ſuch rules of judgment, as led him more eaſily to diſtinguiſh between good and bad; and thus he was ſecured againſt the infection and the poiſon, both of the living and the dead.

He had early cautions given him to avoid the bantering tribe of mortals, and was inſtructed to diſtinguiſh a jeſt from an argument, ſo that a loud laugh at his religion, never puts him nor his faith out of countenance. He is ever ready to render a reaſon of his chriſtian hope and to defend his creed; but he ſcorns to enter the liſts with ſuch a diſputant that has no artillery but ſquib and flaſh, no arguments beſides grimace and ridicule. Thus he ſupports the character of a chriſtian with honour; he confines his faith to his Bible, and his practice to all the rules of piety; and yet thinks as freely as that vain herd of Atheiſts and Deiſts who arrogate the name of Free Thinkers to themſelves.

You will inquire perhaps, how he came to attain ſo manly a conduct in life, at ſo early an age, and how every thing of the boy was worn off ſo ſoon. Truely, beſides other influences, it is much owing to the happy management of ERASTE, the name of the lady his mother, who was frequent in the nurſery, and inſpired ſentiments into his childhood becoming riper years. When there was company in the parlour, with whom ſhe could uſe ſuch freedom, ſhe brought her ſon in among them, not to entertain them with his own noiſe, tattle, and impertinence, but to hear their diſcourſe, and ſometimes to anſwer a little queſtion or two they might aſk him. When he was grown up to a youth, he was often admitted into the room with his father's acquaintance, and who indulged the liberty to aſk and inquire on ſubjects that ſeemed to be above his years. He was encouraged to ſpeak a ſentence or two of his own thoughts, and thus to learn and practiſe a modeſt aſſurance. But when the company was gone, he was approved and praiſed if he behaved well, or received kind hints of admonition, that he might know when he had been too ſilent, and when too forward to ſpeak. Thus by enjoying the advantage of ſociety above the level of his own age and underſtanding, he was always aſpiring to imitation; and the exceſſes and defects of his conduct were daily noticed and cured.

His curioſity was gratified abroad with new ſights and ſcenes, as often as his parents could do it with convenience, that he might not ſtare and wonder at every ſtrange object or occurrence; but he was made patient of reſtraint and diſappointment, when he ſeemed to indulge an exceſſive deſire of any needleſs diverſion. If he ſought any criminal pleaſures, or diverſions attended with great danger or inconvenience, the purſuit of them was abſolutely forbidden; but it was done in ſo kind a manner, as made the guilt or peril of them appear in the ſtrongeſt light, and thereby they were rendered hateful or formidable, rather than the objects of wiſh or deſire.

When EUGENIO firſt began to go abroad in the world, his companions were recommended to him by the prudence of his parents; or if he choſe them himſelf, it was ſtill within the reach of his tutor's obſervation, or the notice of his father's eye. Nor was he ſuffered to run looſe into promiſcuous company, till it appeared that his mind was furniſhed with ſteady principles of virtue; till he had knowledge enough to defend thoſe principles, and to repel the aſſaults that might be made upon his faith. For this reaſon, till he was twenty years old, he gave account to his ſuperiours how he ſpent the day, whenever he was abſent from them; though they did not at that age require, he ſhould aſk formal leave for a few hours excurſion.

Yet it was hardly thought fit to truſt him to his own conduct for whole days together, leſt he ſhould meet with temptations too hard for his virtue, till he had gained reſolution enough to ſay NO boldly, and to maintain an obſtinate refuſal of pernicious pleaſures. He was told beforehand how the profane and the lewd would uſe all the arts of addreſs, and how ſubtilly they would practiſe upon his good humour with powerful and tempting importunities. This ſet him ever on his guard, and though he carried his ſweetneſs of temper always about him, yet he learned to conceal it wherever it was neither proper nor ſafe to appear. By a little converſe in the world, he found that it was neceſſary to be poſſitive, bold, and unmoveable, in rejecting every propoſal which might endanger his character or morals; eſpecially as he ſoon became ſenſible that a ſoft and cold denial gave courage to new attacks, and left him liable to be teaſed with freſh ſolicitations. He laid down this therefore for a conſtant rule, that where his reaſon had determined any practice to be either plainly ſinful, or utterly inexpedient, he would give ſo firm a denial, on the principles of virtue and religion, as ſhould for ever diſcourage any further ſolicitations. This gave him the character of a man of reſolute virtue, even among the ranks of the time, nor was he leſs eſteemed on this account. At firſt indeed he thought it a happy victory which he had gotten over himſelf, when he could defy the ſhame of the world, and reſolve to be a chriſtian in the face of vice and infidelity. He found the ſhorteſt way to conquer this fooliſh ſhame, was to renounce it at once; then it was eaſy to practiſe ſingularity amidſt a profane multitude. When he began to get courage enough to profeſs reſolute piety without a bluſh, in the midſt of ſuch company as this, AGATHUS and ERASTE then permitted their ſon to travel abroad, to ſee more of the world, under the protection of their daily prayers. His firſt tour was through the neighbouring countries of *England*. He afterward enlarged the circuit of his travels, until he had viſited foreign nations, and learned the value of his own.

In ſhort, the reſtraints of his younger years were tempered with ſo much liberty, and managed with ſuch prudence and tenderneſs, and theſe bonds of diſcipline were ſo gradually looſened, as faſt as he grew wiſe enough to govern himſelf, that EUGENIO always carried about with him an inward conviction of the great love and wiſdom of his parents and his tutor. The humours of the child now and then felt ſome reluctance againſt the pious diſcipline of his elders; but now he is arrived at manhood, there is nothing that he looks back upon with greater ſatisfaction than the ſteps of their conduct, and the inſtances of his own ſubmiſſion. He often recounts theſe things with pleaſure, as ſome of the chief favours of heaven, whereby he was guarded through all the dangers and follies of youth and childhood, and effectually kept, through divine grace operating by theſe happy means, from a thouſand ſorrows; and perhaps from everlaſting ruin.

Though he has been releaſed ſome years from the ſtrictneſs of paternal government, yet he ſtill makes his parents his choſen friends; and though they ceaſe to practiſe authority upon him and abſolute command, yet he pays the utmoſt deference to their counſels, and to the firſt notice of their inclinations. You ſhall never find him reſiſting and debating againſt their deſires and propenſities in little common things of life, which are indifferent in themſelves; he thinks it carries in it too much contempt of thoſe whom God and nature requires him to honour. In thoſe inſtances of practice which they utterly forbid in their family, he bears ſo tender a regard to their peace, that he will ſcarcely ever allow himſel in them, even when he cannot ſee ſufficient reaſon to pronounce them unlawful. Nor does he pay this regard to his parents alone, but denies himſelf in ſome gratifications which he eſteems innocent, out of regard to what he accounts the miſtaken judgment of ſome pious perſons with whom he converſes and worſhips. They are weak, perhaps, in their auſterities; but St. PAUL has taught him, that the ſtrong ought to bear with the infirmities of the weak, and not to pleaſe themſelves to the offence of the church of God. This he obſerved to be the conſtant practice of AGATHUS and ERASTE, and he maintains a great regard to the examples of ſo much piety and goodneſs, even though his reaſon does not lead him always to embrace their opinions. Whenſoever he enters into an important action of life, he takes a filial pleaſure to ſeek advice from his worthy parents, and it is uneaſy to him to attempt any thing of moment without it. He does not indeed univerſally practiſe all their ſentiments, but he gains their conſent to follow his own reaſon and choice.

Some of the wild young gentlemen of the age may happen to laugh at him for being ſo much a boy ſtill, and for ſhowing ſuch ſubjection to the old folks, as they call them; with a ſcornful ſmile they bid him 'Break off his leading ſtrings, and caſt away his yokes of bondage.' But for the moſt part he obſerves, that the ſame perſons ſhake off all yokes at once, and at once, break the bonds of nature, duty, and religion; they pay but little regard to their Superiour in heaven, any more than to thoſe on earth, and have forgotten God and their parents together. 'Nor will I ever be moved, ſays he, with the reproaches of thoſe who made a jeſt of things ſacred as well as civil, and treat their mother and their Maker with the ſame contempt.'

SECT. XI.

Of the Proper Degrees of Liberty and Reſtraint in the Education of Daughters, illuſtrated by Examples.

IT is neceſſary that youth ſhould be laid under ſome reſtraint. When our inclinations are violent, and our judgment weak, it was a wiſe proviſion of God our Creator, that we ſhould be under the conduct of thoſe who were born before us; and that we ſhould be bound to obey them, who have an innate ſolicitude for our happineſs, and are much fitter to judge for our advantage, than we ourſelves can be in that early part of life.

But it may be ſaid, liberty is ſo glorious a bleſſing, that ſurely it ought not utterly to be taken away from the young, leſt their ſpirits be cramped and enſlaved, and the growth of their ſouls ſo ſtinted by a narrow and ſevere reſtraint, that they act all their lives like children under age. Or ſometimes a too rigid confinement will have the contrary effect, and make the impatience of youth break out beyond all bounds, as ſoon as ever they get the firſt reliſh of freedom.

But O how exceedingly difficult it is to hit the middle way! How hard for parents to manage their own authority with ſo much gentleneſs, and to regulate the liberties of their children with ſo wiſe a diſcipline, as to fall into neither extreme, nor give unhappy occaſion for cenſure! Though I have ſpoken my opinion freely, that it is ſafer to err on the ſide of reſtraint, than of exceſſive indulgence.

ANTIGONE had an excellent mother, but ſhe died young; ANTIGONE, and her elder ſiſter, from their very infancy, were placed under a grandmother's care. The good old gentlewoman trained them up perciſely in the forms in which ſhe herſelf was educated, when the modes of breeding had, it muſt be confeſſed, too much narrowneſs and auſterity. She gave them all the good inſtructions ſhe had received from her anceſtors, and would ſcarcely ever ſuffer them to be out of her ſight. She ſaw the eldeſt well married at five and twenty, and ſettled in a courſe of virtue and religion; ſhe found her zeal and pious care attended with ſucceſs in ſeveral of her poſterity, and ſhe departed this life in peace.

But unhappy ANTIGONE took a different turn; ſhe was let looſe into the world with all her poſſeſſions and powers in her own hand; and falling into vain company, ſhe got ſuch a taſte of unbounded liberty and modiſh vices, that ſhe could never reflect upon the method of her own education without angry remarks or ridicule.

When ſhe came to have children of her own, ſhe ſtill retained the ſentiment which ſhe had conceived at the conduct of her grandmother, and therefore ſhe reſolved that her daughters ſhould be bred up in the other extreme.

'In my younger times, ſaid ſhe, we were kept hard to the labour of the needle, and ſpent ſix hours a day at it, as though I were to get my bread by my finger's ends; but a little of that buſineſs ſhall ſerve theſe children, for their father has left them good fortunes of their own.

'We were not ſuffered to read any thing but the bible and ſermon books; but I ſhall teach mine politer leſſons out of plays and romances, that they may be acquainted with the world betimes.'

'My eldeſt ſiſter was ſcarcely allowed to ſpeak in company till ſhe was married, and it was a tireſome length of years before that day came. The old proverb ran thus, *A maiden muſt be ſeen, and not heard.* But I hope my little daughters will not be dumb.'

'We were always confined to dwell at home, unleſs ſome occaſion called us abroad, perhaps once in a month, or twice in a ſummer. We were taught to play the good houſe wife in the kitchen and the paſtry, and were well inſtructed in the conduct of the broom and duſter; but we knew nothing of the mode of the court, and diverſions of the town. I ſhould be aſhamed to ſee theſe young creatures that are under my care, ſo awkward in company at fourteen, as I was at four and twenty.'

And thus ANTIGONE brought up her young family of daughters agreeable to her own looſe notions; for ſhe had formed her ſentiments of education merely from the averſion ſhe had conceived to the way of her elders, and choſe the very reverſe of their conduct for her rule, becauſe their piety and wiſdom had a little allay of rigour and ſtiffneſs attending it.

The young things, under their mothers eye, could manage the tea table at ten years old, when they could hardly read a chapter in the New Teſtament. At fourteen they learned the airs of the world; they gad abroad at their pleaſure, and will hardly ſuffer ANTIGONE to direct them or go with them; they deſpiſe the old woman betimes, for they can viſit without her attendence, and prattle abundantly without her prompting.

She led or ſent them to the playhouſe twice or thrice a week, where a great part of their natural modeſty is worn off and forgotten; modeſty, the guard of youthful virtue! They can talk love ſtories out of CLEOPATRA; they are well practiſed already in the arts of ſcandal, and for want of better furniture of mind, emptineſs and impertinence, ribands and faſhions, gay gentlemen and wanton ſongs, ever dwell upon their tongues. They have been taught ſo little to ſet a guard upon themſelves, that their virtue is much ſuſpected. But, be that as it will, they are ſeized and married before ſixteen, being tempted away to bind themſelves for life, to a laced coat and faſhionable wig. Thus children ſet up at once to govern a family, but ſo ignorant in all thoſe concerns, that, from the garret to the kitchen, the whole houſe is entirely ruled by the humour of the ſervants, becauſe the young miſtreſs knows not how to inſtruct or correct them. There is neither religion nor prudence among them, at home nor abroad. Thus they make haſte to ruin and miſery in this world, without thought or hope of the world to come, and the heaven or the hell that await us there.

ANTIGONE ſees her own miſtake too late; and though ſhe has not ſo juſt a ſenſe and horrour of their looſe and profane life as would become her years, yet ſhe is never to ſee herſelf neglected ſo ſoon, and ſcorned by her own children;

but ſhe confeſſes, with a ſigh, that ſhe has led them the way, by laughing ſo often at her good old grandmother.

How much wiſer is PHRONISSA in the education that ſhe gives her daughters, who maintain a happy medium between the ſeverity of the laſt age, and the wild licence of this! She manages her conduct towards them with ſuch an admirable felicity, that though ſhe confines them within the ſacred limits of virtue and religion, yet they have not a wiſh beyond the liberties which they enjoy.

PHRONISSA, when her daughters were little children, uſed to ſpend ſome hours daily in the nurſery, and taught the young creatures to recite many a pretty paſſage out of the Bible, before they were capable of reading it themſelves; yet at ſix years old they read the ſcriptures with eaſe, and then rejoiced to find the ſame ſtories in Geneſis and in the Goſpels which their mother had taught them before. As their years advanced, they were admitted into the beſt converſation, and had ſuch books put into their hands, as might acquaint them with the rules of prudence and piety in an eaſy and familiar way; the reading the lives of eminent perſons who were examples of this kind, was one of the daily methods ſhe uſed, at once to inſtruct and entertain them. By ſuch means, and others which ſhe wiſely adapted to their advancing age, they had all the knowledge beſtowed upon them that could be ſuppoſed proper for women, and that might render their character honourable and uſeful in the world.

As for plays and romances, they were ever bred up in a juſt apprehenſion of the danger and miſchief of them: COLLIER's View of the Stage was early put into their cloſets, that they might learn there the hideous immorality and profaneneſs of the Engliſh comedies; and by the way, he forbids us to hope from our tragical poets a much ſafer entertainment. There they might read enough to forbid their attendances on the playhouſe, and ſee the poiſon expoſed, without danger of the infection. The ſervants that waited on them, and the books that were left within their reach, were ſuch as never corrupted their minds with impure words or images.

Long has PHRONISSA known that domeſtic virtues are the buſineſs and the honour of her ſex. Nature and hiſtory agree to aſſure her, that the conduct of the houſehold is committed to the women, and the precepts and examples of ſcripture confirm it. She educated her daughters therefore in conſtant acquaintance with all family affairs, and they knew betimes what belonged to the proviſions of the table, and the furniture of every room. Though her circumſtances were conſiderable in the world, yet by her own example, ſhe made her children know, that a frequent viſit to the kitchen was not beneath their ſtate, nor the common menial affairs too mean for their notice; that they might be able hereafter to manage their own houſe, and not be directed, impoſed upon, and perhaps ridiculed by their own ſervants.

They were initiated early in the ſcience of the needle, and were bred up ſkilful in all the plain and flowery arts of it; but it was never made a taſk nor a toil to them, nor did they waſte their hours in thoſe nice and tedious works, which coſt our female anceſtors ſeven years of their life, and ſtitches without number. To render this exerciſe pleaſant, one of them always entertained the company with ſome uſeful author, while the reſt were at work every one had freedom and encouragement to ſtart what queſtion ſhe pleaſed, and to make any remarks on the preſent ſubject; that reading, working, and converſation, might fill up the hour with variety and delight. Thus while their hands were making garments for themſelves or for the poor, their minds were enriched with treaſures of human and divine knowledge.

At proper ſeaſons the young ladies were inſtructed in the gayer accompliſhments of their age; but they were taught to eſteem the ſong and the dance, ſome of their meaneſt talents, becauſe they are often forgotten in advanced years, and add but little to the virtue, the honour, or the happineſs of life.

Phronissa herſelf was ſprightly and active, and ſhe abhorred a ſlothful and lazy humour; therefore ſhe conſtantly found out ſome inviting and agreeable employment for her daughters, that they might hate idleneſs as a miſchievous vice, and be trained up to an active and uſeful life. Yet ſhe perpetually inſinuated the ſuperiour delights of the cloſet, and tempted them by all divine methods to the love of devout retirement. Whenſoever ſhe ſeemed to diſtinguiſh them by any peculiar favours, it was generally upon ſome new indication of early piety, or ſome young practice of a ſelf denying virtue.

They were taught to receive viſits in form, agreeable to the age; and though they knew the modes of dreſs ſufficiently to ſecure them from any thing awkward or unfaſhionable, yet their minds were ſo well furniſhed with richer variety, that they had no need to run to thoſe poor and trivial topics to exclude ſilence and dulneſs from the drawing room. They would not give ſuch an affront to the underſtandings of the ladies their viſitants, as to treat them with ſuch meanneſs and impertinence; therefore all this ſort of converſation was reſerved, almoſt entirely, for the minutes appointed to the milliner and the tire woman.

Here I muſt publiſh it to their honour, to provoke the ſex to imitation, that though they comported with the faſhion in all their ornaments, ſo far as the faſhion was modeſt, and could approve itſelf to reaſon or religion, yet PHRONISSA would not ſuffer their younger judgments ſo far to be impoſed on by cuſtom, as that the mode ſhould be entirely the meaſure of all decency to them. She knew there is ſuch a thing as natural harmony and agreeableneſs; in the beauties of colour and figure, her delicacy of taſte was exquiſite; and where the mode run counter to nature, though ſhe indulged her daughters to follow it in ſome innocent inſtances, becauſe ſhe loved not to be remarkably ſingular in things of indifference, yet ſhe took care always to teach them to diſtinguiſh gay folly and affected extravagance from natural decencies, both in furniture and in dreſs: Their rank in the world was eminent, but they never appeared the firſt, nor the higheſt in any new fangled forms of attire. By her wiſe example and inſtructions ſhe had ſo formed their minds, as to be able to ſee garments more gaudy, and even more modiſh than their own, without envy or wiſhes. They could bear to find a trimming ſet on a little awry, or the plait of a garment ill diſpoſed, without making the whole houſe and the day uneaſy, and the ſun and heavens ſmile upon them in vain.

PHRONISSA taught them the happy art of managing a viſit with ſome uſeful improvement of the hour, and without offence. If a word of ſcandal occured in company, it was ſoon diverted or ſuppreſſed. The children were charged to ſpeak well of their neighbours as far as truth would admit, and to be ſilent as to any thing further; but when the poor or the deformed were mentioned in diſcourſe, the aged, the lame, or the blind, thoſe objects were handled with the utmoſt tenderneſs; nothing could diſpleaſe PHRONISSA more than to hear a jeſt thrown upon natural infirmities; ſhe thought there was ſomething ſacred in miſery, and it was not to be touched with a rude hand. All reproach and ſatire of this kind was forever baniſhed where ſhe came; and if ever railery was indulged, vice and wilful folly were the conſtant ſubjects of it.

Perſons of diſtinguiſhed characters ſhe always diſtinguiſhed in her reſpect, and trained up her family to pay the ſame civilities. Whenever ſhe named her own parents it was with high veneration and love, and thereby ſhe naturally led her children to give due honour to all their ſuperiour relatives.

Though it is the faſhion of the age to laugh at the prieſthood in all forms, and to teach every boy to ſcoff at a miniſter, PHRONISSA paid double honours to them who laboured in the word and doctrine, where their perſonal behaviour upheld the dignity of their office; for ſhe was perſuaded SAINT PAUL was a better director than the gay gentlemen of the mode, 1 Tim. v. 17. Beſides ſhe wiſely conſidered, that a contempt of their perſons would neceſſarily bring with it a contempt of all their miniſtrations; and then ſhe might carry her daughters to the church as much as ſhe pleaſed, but preaching and praying, and all ſacred things, would grow deſpicable and uſeleſs when they had firſt learned to make a jeſt of the preacher.

But are theſe young ladies always confined at home? Are they never ſuffered to ſee the world? Yes, and ſometimes without the guard of a mother too; though PHRONISSA is ſo well beloved by her children, that they would very ſeldom chuſe to go without her. Their ſouls are inlaid betimes with the principles of virtue and prudence; theſe are their conſtant guard; nor do they ever wiſh to make a viſit where their mother has reaſon to ſuſpect their ſafety.

They have freedom given them in all the common affairs of life to chuſe for themſelves, but they take pleaſure, for the moſt part, in referring the choice back again to their elders. PHRONISSA has managed the reſtraint of their younger years with ſo much reaſon and love, that they have ſeemed all their lives to know nothing but liberty; an admonition of their parents meets with cheerful compliance, and is never debated.

A wiſh or deſire has the ſame power over them now, as a command had in their infancy and childhood; for the command was ever dreſſed in the ſofteſt language of authority, and this made every act of obedience a delight, till it became an habitual pleaſure.

In ſhort, they have been educated with ſuch diſcretion, tenderneſs, and piety, as have laid a foundation to make them happy and uſeful in the riſing age; their parents with pleaſure view the growing proſpect, and return daily thanks to Almighty God, whoſe bleſſing has attended their watchful cares, and has thus far anſwered their moſt fervent devotions.

THE END.

JAN 4 1915